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MEN OF THE WORLD, MID HUM AND STIR, RING OF ANVIL AND FRET OF LOOM,
BUILD FOR YOUR THOUGHTS A THOROUGHFARE, KEEP FOR YOUR SOULS A SILENT ROOM

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SINODUN

WHEN Roman legions climbed the hill
And saddles creaked and armour rang,
Above the tramp of marching feet
Unmarked, an Oxford blackbird sang.

The winds that moved among those trees
Blow down the centuries again
And on a summer day I hear
Once more the tramp of marching men;

Yet as I watch—no Roman eyes
Look darkly out on English things,
But only, from his chosen tree,
Unseen, an Oxford blackbird sings.

LETTICE HAFFENDEN.

SIR CHARLES G. D. ROBERTS

SIR CHARLES G. D. ROBERTS, known as the Father of Canadian Literature, was born in 1860 at the period when Canada was struggling in the throes of evolution. Roberts's birth therefore coincided with the new order of things and he became the first voice of the young Dominion, of a literature sprung from the Canadian soil he loves so well. The motivating force of the major portion of his poetry and prose has been the love of the land from which he sprang.

Rocks, I am one with you;
Sea, I am yours.
Your rages come and go,
Your strength endures.

. . . . .

Fir-tree, beaten by wind,
Sombre, austere,
Your sap is in my veins,
O kinsman dear.

Your fibres rude and true
My sinews feed—
Sprung of the same bleak earth,
The same rough seed—

Thus he sings in *The Native* disclosing the web and woof of his genius.

The titles of many of Roberts's poems reveal that the Maritime Provinces of Canada were the fount of his inspiration. *The Logs* is but one of many fine picturizations of Canadian outdoor life:

In thronged procession gliding slow
The great logs sullenly seaward go.

A blind and blundering multitude
They jostle on the swollen flood,

Nor guess the inevitable fate
To greet them at the river-gate

When noiseless hours have lured them down
To the wide booms, the busy town,

The mills, the chains, the screeching jaws
Of the eviscerating saws.

Eldest son of the Rev. G. Goodridge Roberts, a distinguished scholar and radiant personality, and of a mother related to Emerson, Charles G. D. Roberts spent his early childhood at Westcock Rectory close to the spot where the great river Tantramar empties its waters into the Bay of Fundy. In one of his latest poems entitled *Two Rivers* Roberts voices his devotion to the Trantramar and to the St. John, a devotion which all down the years has been one of the *leit motifs* of his poetry.

As a youth Roberts displayed not only great intellectual gifts but physical strength far above the ordinary. His magnificent physique enabled him to enjoy to the full the open-air pleasures offered by the Canadian backwoods where he acquired that love and expert knowledge of Nature which has been the source of much of his finest work both in poetry and in prose. When still in his early teens, Roberts resolutely turned from the art of painting for which he displayed great talent and also abandoned the study of music to devote himself whole-mindedly to literature. Faithful to his self-dedication, at the age of sixteen he graduated with the Douglas medal in classics, and about the same time had the singular honour for so young a writer of seeing his *Memnon* in print in *Scribner's Magazine*.

At twenty-five, Charles G. D. Roberts already occupied the Chair of English Literature at the University of King's College, Windsor, Nova Scotia, and was a regular contributor to leading U.S.A. magazines of poems and prose which proved him to be a consummate artist. He introduced into the realm of poetry his love of colour and design which, coupled with his skill as rhythmist, imbues his work with a subtle quality of infinite charm.

Often the swing and the swirl of Roberts's words have the fine harmony, the exhilarating measure, characteristic of Keats and Swinburne.

> My glad feet shone with the glittering steel
> I was the god of the wingèd heel.
>
> . . . . .
>
> A spinning whisper, a sibilant twang,
> As the stroke of the steel on the tense ice rang ;

And the wandering wind was left behind
As faster, faster I followed my mind;

Till the blood sang high in my eager brain,
And the joy of my flight was almost pain.
From *The Skater*.

There is perfect poise about the lightness yet firmness of Roberts's touch. No matter how powerful, how colourful his lines, they never sag from an overweight of words. No roughness nor excrescent ugliness intercepts their flow, for Roberts the polished stylist has never deviated from his devotion to beauty.

Spirit of Beauty,
Never shall you escape me.
Through glad or bitter days
Hearten and shape me.

Since first these eyes could see
Still have they sought you.
Since first my soul knew dream
My dreams have wrought you.

. . . . .

Your voice I hear
In the laughter of leaves, in the falling
Of waves on an empty shore
And a far bell calling.

. . . . .

And when Night comes
And the faithless senses forsake me,
Out of my cold, last sleep
You, you shall awake me.

The poems from which extracts are cited, by kind permission of the Ryerson Press, Toronto, are all included in Sir Charles's latest volume of *Selected Poems* which appeared at the end of 1936. In this fine collection, his ten books of verse from *Orion and Other Poems* (1880) to *The Iceberg* (1934), also published by the Ryerson Press, Toronto, are all represented. Roberts has expressed himself with equal felicity through the medium of sonnet, ode, ballad, lyric and *vers libre* and has followed with tolerant but piercing gaze the movements of the moderns, sifting carefully the grain from the chaff. In the Prefatory Note

to the *Selected Poems* he has succinctly defined his attitude: "From early youth to the present day I have always been alive to the moment, keenly aware of contemporary currents of thought, action and emotion. . . As there is just now a good deal of difference of opinion—a healthy difference, if at times somewhat acrimoniously expressed—in regard to what constitutes poetry both in form and in content, it may not be unfitting for me to indicate my own position in the matter. The following sentences from a Preface by Mr. Humbert Wolfe seem to me relevant:

> 'There is no such thing' (as modern verse) 'and never has been. Nor is there ancient verse. There are only oldish men in each generation misunderstanding what is being written now, side by side with youngish men misunderstanding what was written then. Verse itself cares nothing for the oldish men nor the youngish men, nor indeed for anything but itself.'

It seems to me it is all a matter of the succeeding cycles of reaction. Reaction is life."

The selections include specimens of Sir Charles's early work, such as *Tantramar Revisited* dated from the year 1887, written in rigid Ovidian elegiac metre, with formal alternation of hexameter and pentameter lines, and examples of his latest work such as *The Iceberg* which, published in 1934, is remarkable for its freedom of structure:

I was spawned from the glacier,
A thousand miles due north
Beyond Cape Chidley;
And the spawning,
When my vast, wallowing bulk went under,
Emerged and heaved aloft,
Shaking down cataracts from its rocking sides,
With mountainous surge and thunder
Outraged the silence of the arctic sea.

Before I was thrust forth
A thousand years I crept,
Crawling, crawling, crawling irresistibly,
Hid in the blue womb of the eternal ice,
While under me the tortured rock
Groaned,
And over me the immeasurable desolation slept.

Amongst the most important of the patriotic poems is *These Three Score Years: An Ode for Canada's Diamond Jubilee* (1927) which poem, by reason of its subjective approach and essentially modern flexibility of structure, offers a most interesting contrast to the classic purity of the Ode *Ave*, composed in 1892, for the Centenary of the Birth of Shelley.

> These three score fateful years!
> So swiftly have they sped, so fleetly wrought,
> Our eyes, confused by dust of toil and strife,
> By turmoil of desires and hopes and fears,
> Have scarce perceived the miracles they wrought,
> Or sensed the splendours burgeoning into life;
> Till now, on this proud day we celebrate,
> Pausing to count the cost and gain, we stand
> With eyes unsealed, with wondering hearts elate,
> To view the task complete as our great Fathers planned.

In his handling of classical themes Roberts creates landscapes distinguished by a peculiar imaginative power which render them unique. His imagery is not only the fruit of his classical knowledge but of his Nature study.

The *Ave* contains many stirring lines addressed to his beloved Tantramar:

> The mystic river whence you take your name,
> River of hubbub, raucous Tantramar,
> Untamable and changeable as flame,
> It called me and compelled me from afar,
> Shaping my soul with its impetuous stress.
>
> . . . . .
>
> Therefore with no far flight, from Tantramar
> And my still world of ecstasy, to thee,
> Shelley, to thee I turn, the avatar
> Of Song, Love, Dream, Desire and Liberty;
> To thee I turn with reverent hands of prayer
> And lips that fain would ease my heart of praise,
> Whom chief of all whose brows prophetic wear
> The pure and sacred bays
> I worship, and have worshipped since the hour
> When first I felt thy bright and chainless power.

No other Canadian poet has attained such clarity of cosmic vision as Charles G. D. Roberts. As mystic he is keenly cognizant of the forces behind the outer aspects, his is no

face value appreciation, he has broken the crust, has delved deeply into the inner mysteries and his awareness of them is manifest beneath the shining surface of his work. He is peculiarly alive to the spiritual texture, emotional restraint and musical purity demanded by the sonnet, and there is a vast fund of esoteric meaning in much of his work in this form. *O Solitary of the Austere Sky* is only one of many sonnets pregnant with occult worth :

O Solitary of the austere sky,
Pale presence of the unextinguished star,
That from thy station where the spheres wheel by,
And quietudes of infinite patience are,
Watchest this wet, grey-visaged world emerge,—
Cold pinnacle on pinnacle, and deep
On deep of ancient wood and wandering surge,—
Out of the silence and the mists of sleep ;
How small am I in thine august regard !
Invisible,—and yet I know my worth !
When comes the hour to break this prisoning shard,
And reunite with Him that breathed me forth,
Then shall this atom of the Eternal Soul
Encompass thee in its benign control !

In a footnote to his poem " The Place of His Rest " Roberts states that this work was composed in his sleep—an interesting instance of the working of the subjective mind, of the mystic afflatus which defies analysis.

To those who believe in re-incarnation *Re-Birth* makes a special appeal :

I had stumbled up thro' Time from the slime to the heights,
Then fallen into the stillness of the tomb.
For an age I had lain in the pulseless, senseless dark,
I had swooned in the darkness of the tomb.

I had slept for an age without a dream or stir
Till a voice came, troubling the pools of sleep.
From the long-forgotten bones, the immemorial dust,
I fled up from the smother of my sleep.

A naked soul, I bathed in the light ineffable,
I floated in the ecstasy of light.
Yet I ached with desire for a dream I could not grasp,
And I struggled to pierce beyond the light.

. . . . .

Once again was I snared in the kindly flesh of man.
The kind flesh closed away my sight.
But before the mists of temporal forgetting shut me in
I had seen, far off, the Vision and the Height.

The path of the seer is illuminated by the light of love. Many of Roberts's love poems are in mystic vein, painted with clear, firm strokes against a spiritual background. Several appeared originally in *New York Nocturnes* published in 1898 and now out of print, and in *The Book of the Rose*, which appeared in 1903 and is also out of print.

The following passages are from *A Nocturne of Consecration*:

I talked about you, Dear, the other night,
Having myself alone with my delight.
Alone with dreams and memories of you,
All the divine-houred summer stillness through
I talked of life, of love the always new,
Of tears and joy—yet only talked of you

. . . . .

To the white stars,
Eternal and all-seeing,
In their wide home beyond the wells of being,
I said—"There is a little cloud that mars
The mystical perfection of her kiss.
Mine, mine, she is,
As far as lip to lip, and heart to heart,
And spirit to spirit when lips and hands must part,
Can make her mine. But there is more than this,—
More, more of her to know.
For still her soul escapes me unaware,
To dwell in secret where I may not go.
Take and uplift me. Make me wholly hers."

Said the white stars, the heavenly ministers,—
"This life is brief, but it is only one.
Before to-morrow's sun
For one or both of you it may be done.
This love of yours is only just begun.
Will all the ecstasy that may be won
Before this life its little course has run
At all suffice
The love that agonizes in your eyes?
Therefore be wise.
Content you with the wonder of love that lies
Between her lips and underneath her eyes.

If more you should surprise,
What would be left to hope from Paradise?

. . . . .

The thing then learned
Has ever since within my bosom burned—
One life is not enough for love of you.

While some of Robert's love poems are characterized by delicate reserve, others are rich and warm in colouring with emotional force suggestive of Swinburne and Baudelaire. One of the most representative taken from *The Book of the Rose*, and reproduced in the *Selected Poems*, is *The Rose of My Desire*:

O wild, dark flower of woman,
Deep rose of my desire,
An eastern wizard made you
Of earth and stars and fire.

When the orange moon swung low
Over the camphor-trees,
By the silver shaft of the fountain
He wrought his mysteries.

The hot, sweet mould of the garden
He took from a secret place
To become your glimmering body
And the lure of your strange face.

From the swoon of the tropic heaven
He drew down star on star
And breathed them into your soul
That your soul might wander far—

On earth forever homeless
But intimate of the spheres,
A pang in your mystic laughter,
A portent in your tears.

From the night's heat, hushed, electric,
He summoned a shifting flame
And cherished it and blew on it
Till it burned into your name.

And he set the name in my heart
For an unextinguished fire,
O wild, dark flower of woman,
Deep rose of my desire.

In 1906 the University of New Brunswick bestowed upon Charles G. D. Roberts the degree of L.L.D. When the Great War broke out in 1914, Dr. Roberts was living in London. Although he was already fifty-four years of age, Roberts, hearkening to the bidding of his adventurous spirit, enlisted as a private in the Legion of Frontiersmen and was assigned the task of training cavalry remounts. Within a very short time from the date of his becoming a tommy he had received his commission in the King's Liverpool Regiment. He obtained rapid promotion to the rank of Major and continued in the army after the Armistice until he had completed the third volume of *Canada in Flanders*, the official story of the Canadian Expeditionary Force.

In 1925 Roberts visited Canada on a lecture tour and was prevailed upon to settle once again in the land of his birth. Soon after he had made this decision he was the recipient of the first Lorne Pierce gold medal which is only one of many honours conferred upon him in recognition of his services to Canadian literature.

In several of his ballads, Roberts has embodied Indian legends. A few years back, to show their appreciation of his sympathetic treatment of these themes, the Sarcee Indians bestowed upon Sir Charles chiefhood of their tribe, the greatest honour at their disposal, which they had previously given to the Duke of Windsor when he was Prince of Wales and to Sir John Martin-Harvey. The picturesque ceremony at which Sir Charles was made Na-Kee-Tlee-Se Ah-Keè-Tcha, meaning Chief Great Scribe, took place at Calgary on the occasion of the Convention of the Canadian Authors' Association of which Institution Sir Charles is President. In days of strife each feather in the ceremonial helmets of the Indian Chiefs represented a warlike achievement. Every eagle plume in the magnificent headdress presented to Sir Charles symbolizes one of his many books, a member of his family of brain children who will carry down his name to posterity.

Among other titles this distinguished Canadian poet has earned that of " Poet Laureate of the Animal World " by

reason of his animal stories which, having attained great fame and popularity among English readers, have been translated into many foreign languages. Roberts is the leader of that group of writers who maintain that the furtive folk of the forest are motivated in their actions by a process akin to reasoning. In this theory Roberts and his followers are supported by such reliable authorities as trappers, trainers and backwoodsmen. Nova Scotia, the background of Longfellow's *Evangeline*, has been so skilfully portrayed by Roberts, both in poetry and in prose, that he is frequently called "The Longfellow of Canada." This atmosphere of the forest primaeval and of its four-footed denizens has been reproduced with subtle genius in *Barbara Ladd*, one of Roberts's finest and most popular novels, of which eighty thousand copies sold in the United States alone. Several of his works of fiction have been reproduced in cheap editions by the firm of J. M. Dent and Sons, Ltd. They include *The Forge in the Forest*, *Lovers in Acadie*, *In The Morning of Time*, and numerous other delightful tales mirroring the author's home land.

On January 10, 1938, Sir Charles celebrates his seventy-eighth birthday. His home in Toronto is a source of inspiration to all young writers who have the privilege of entry, for the Father of Canadian Literature is unfailing in his encouragement of literary effort bearing the hall-mark of sincerity. Untiring in his labours, Sir Charles G. D. Roberts continues to increase his grand store of poetry and prose—that precious fruit born of over sixty years of creative activity bridging two centuries.

In his most important prose work, his *History of Canada* published in 1897, Roberts remarked: "The figures of our younger writers—poets, novelists, essayists, historians—are still obscured by the dust of struggle. . . They have gained a creditable standing in the eyes of the world; but it is not for a contemporary to say which heads of them tower the highest, which names should live on the pages of our country's history. Suffice to say that they are helping to give effective form to the growing national sentiment of our people."

During the forty years that have elapsed since the above sentences were penned the dust of struggle has dispersed, leaving clearly distinguishable above his fellows the figure of Sir Charles G. D. Roberts, the Dean of Canadian Literature, who has admirably depicted his high ideals, his austerity of intellectual purpose, in *The Aim*:

O Thou who lovest not alone
The swift success, the instant goal,
But has a lenient eye to mark
The failures of the inconstant soul,

Consider not my little worth,—
The mean achievement, scamped in act,
The high resolve and low result,
The dream that durst not face the fact.

But count the reach of my desire.
Let this be something in Thy sight:—
I have not, in the slothful dark,
Forgot the Vision and the Height.

Neither my body nor my soul
To earth's low ease will yield consent.
I praise Thee for my will to strive.
I bless Thy goad of discontent.

ETHEL ROSENTHAL.

I LOVE ALL LOVELY THINGS

KEEN is the love I bear all lovely things
The slender tern on swift unhurried wings
Beauty of hills that brings the old heart-ache;
Beautiful, tender words the soul to wake:
This is the song that every song-bird sings—
Keen is the love I bear all lovely things.

M. D. CAMERON.

The Editor appreciates "Vaga Bond's" lines and would like to have full name and address in confidence.

IN AUTUMN ON THE DOWNS

O LOVELY day upon the Downs !
And lovelier far had we but been
In closer harmony with so sublime a scene.
But we had come too lately from the strife,
And heated from the chase of vain desires,
To join in those high symphonies of life ;
Beauty requires
our aid,
If we would ever know
The realm that she would rear,
The realm that she has made
In embryo ;
she has laid
Great inspirations for us
In external nature ;
And in the mind of man
Has given us to receive
And give again,
Till the eternal plan
Shall be obeyed ;
Till every living thing shall move
And act in concert with eternal Love.

W. MARSHALL.

IN PRAISE OF ROOTS

TWO halves make one ; beneath the lake
Whereon the eddying ripples break
In golden crescents its serene,
Shines half the sun with fire unseen.

Down and deeper down trees root
For nutriment for soil and shoot.
The forward wave comes from the deep :
Creation moves that seems asleep.

O fiery man, whose boast is gleam,
Have you no hidden source in dream ?
O wind-tossed man, head high in air,
Wrenching at roots, have you no care ?

NANITA M. BALCOM.

RUDAGI

THE best story told of Rudagi, the "father" of Persian poetry, was first told by Nizami-i-'Aruzi of Samarqand, and last told, so far as I am aware, by Sir Denison Ross, in *A Persian Anthology*, that selection from the translations of Persian poetry made by Edward Granville Browne that ought to be better known. It will bear telling again. The Samanid amir, Nasr II (A.D. 913–942; for the "father" of Persian poetry dates back over a thousand years) had for four years stayed away from his native Bukhara, and his men were very homesick. So they persuaded Rudagi, offering him a great reward, to compose a song, and sing it to the prince: it was to re-fire him with love for Bukhara. So successful was this song, that, when Rudagi reached a certain verse, says Nizami, "the Amir was so much affected that he descended from his throne, bestrode the horse of the sentinel on duty, and set off for Bukhara in such haste that they carried his riding boots after him for two parasangs, as far as Buruna, where he put them on; neither did he draw rein anywhere till he reached Bukhara; and Rudagi received from the army the double of the five thousand dinars he had been promised."

Part of the song, in the translation Browne gives, runs:

> Long live Bukhara! Be thou of good cheer!
> Joyous towards thee hasteth our Amir!
> The Moon's the Prince, Bukhara is the sky;
> O Sky, the Moon shall light thee by and by!
> Bukhara is the mead, the Cypress he;
> Receive at last, O Mead, thy Cypress-tree!

I do not know if that was the first appearance of the cypress in Persian poetry: it was destined to have a long reign. In Hafiz you will find it used as an illustration in thoughts such as these:

> Ah, therefore bear,
> O meadow wind, out of this singing mouth,
> Homage to basil, rose, and cypress rare.

> What needs my garden cypress tree or pine
> Which hath a box-tree, shadow-nurtured, tall?

There more is intended, by the way, than the physical basil, rose, cypress and box-tree of earth's gardens.

Rudagi's great reputation began in his own time. There were two *wazirs*, or prime ministers, father and son. The son translated Tabari's Great Chronicle into Persian: the father declared that Rudagi was "peerless amongst the Arabs and the Persians." And a contemporary poet, Shahid of Balkh, in a verse cited by 'Awfi, says that to say "Bravo!" and "Well done!" to other poets is to praise them, but it would be satire to say "Bravo!" and "Well done!" to Rudagi. Daqiqi, too, Firdawsi's predecessor, speaks of praising one praised in a panegyric of Rudagi's as "bringing dates to Hajar"—a phrase the equivalent of our "bringing coals to Newcastle."

Rudagi was another of the world's blind poets, and it has been asserted that he was born so: that, however, has been doubted. There has been a tendency for the Eastern writers to exaggerate, when dealing with Rudagi's annals. Thus the figure of one hundred camels needed to carry his possessions in the heyday of his prosperity, is exaggerated by Jami to four hundred.

It is not to be expected that much of so early a poet's work should have come down to us, and in fact not much has: what has come down is not in any copy, or fragment of a copy, of his *diwan*, but poems cited by biographers, or given by anthologists. The most diligent searcher in the scattered books hitherto has been Dr. Ethé, the author, too, of three articles on Rudagi. It is because he has given translations, but in German, of the fifty-two pieces collected by him, that Browne gave no renderings of his own, though he gives two by Cowell, FitzGerald's teacher and his own. One of these is:

> When I am dead, my last breath sighed away,
> And spent my latest wish with no return,
> Come by my bed and whisper o'er my clay,
> "I killed thee, and 'tis I who now must mourn."

There are some few translations, in French of course, to be found in Darmesteter's little book, and one of them is a translation of those same four lines. I have made a third version, and having been asked to write a page or two about

Rudagi for the POETRY REVIEW, and to incorporate some of my translations in them, I may give that version here. It is :

When thou shalt see me dead, and these lips shut,
And emptied of its soul this body, whose
Desire is finished, tell my pillow (but
Softly) : " How *mourn* I whom I did refuse ! "

That is a love-poem : other love-poems of Rudagi's are :—

Live happily with the happy, dark of eye.
Life is a tale, a wind.—" O Love, whose hair,
In tresses, smells of musk—my Houri, ply
Thy white-moon magic now, and here, and there ! "
But drink ! For newborn trouble wine makes old.
If thunder peal, and heaven burn lightning fire,
Drink from the sweet cup henna'd fingers hold,
And hear no sound but of her lute and lyre.

" How, far from me," caressing me, she said,
" Beat thy heart ? " Then—" How," blushing, " far
away,"
She said, " did thy soul feel ? " And my reply : " O red
Blossom, now I am with thee, bid me stay ! "

Those are love-poems : the following are in a very different vein :—

You would make life more stable ? But unknown
How to make flux no flux. The world is one.
Utter not what none heareth ever—none.
Murmur not. No one heareth. Never moan.

Wouldst have, until the Resurrection, weeping hearts ?
Tears bring none back of all who've gone before.
The moon—not clouded, not eclipsed—departs.
The world chases a shadow evermore.

My soul, why trouble on the body spend ?
Sets one the Holy Ghost to keep the dogs ?
I have the prophets' truth that's without end.
Why stuff me with Greek science ? It but clogs.

See this rich rider, starred in apogee !—
His offer to God is his immortal soul.
His *shaikh* will praise him ten years hence, when he,
An old man, walking, comes with beggar's bowl.

How many hearts my songs made soft as silk ;
First hard as anvils, once as stone is hard !
Gone is the time my verses lit the world,
And Khurasan proclaimed me as her bard.

There are two remarks to add. One is that it is a mistake to regard 'Umar Khayyam as the greatest of Persian poets, and his vein of free-thinking as a common note in Persian poetry. The other is that to this or that careful student the translators of Persian poetry, comparing this one with that, may appear, or some of them may, not to know their texts too well. This is because theirs has been the same thought that Rennell Rodd has given expression to in his *Renderings from the Greek Anthology*, saying :—

> Not the least essential justification of poetical translation is that the version should constitute a poem on its own account, worthy to stand by itself on its own merits, if the reader were unaware it was a translation.

J. A. CHAPMAN.

HARBOUR AT NIGHT

BEYOND the eternal echo of the surf,
The creak of masts, the gently moving hulls
And, haunting narrow streets, the sound of bells
Is the uncertainty, the gloom of outer spaces ;
That dim magician's carpet tempting men to death.

Darkly it lies and murmurs in its sleep
Of those who ventured, daring, and were lost ;
Drawn by the hidden music of the seas
And the occasional caresses of the wind
To the last bright silence of an empty world.

C. WREY GARDINER.

UNRHYMED POEMS OF YESTERDAY

"IT is natural in English poetry—i.e., middle and modern English, or English poetry proper—to rhyme; and except in the case of blank verse no unrhymed measure for the last seven centuries has ever produced large quantities of uniformly satisfactory quality."[1] These words were written by Saintsbury, probably our greatest prosodist, in 1910. Elsewhere he speaks of rhyme as being "the greatest charm of English verse."[2] Could he have made such a statement to-day, or would he have been forced to admit that there can be subtler substitutes, such as half-rhyme and assonance?

There are, of course, many unrhymed non-lyrical poems that are not in blank verse: *Piers Plowman*, Chapman's *Iliad*, Blake's Prophetic Books, *Hiawatha* and so on; but I shall here confine myself to the lyric, and only to those lyrics which are not pentametrical throughout. Such things, therefore, as Tennyson's *Tears, idle tears* and *Now sleeps the crimson petal, now the white*, although they are not really in blank verse, will not be considered.

There is now not very much left—till we come to this century. There are, indeed, only about two well-known unrhymed lyrics written before 1800: Campion's *Rose-cheeked Laura come* and Collins' *Ode to Evening*. Some of the choruses of *Samson Agonistes* should perhaps be included and some Sapphics by Watts (*The Day of Judgement*).

Campion's experiment (he made others, including Sapphics) occurs in a pamphlet[3] (1602) which attacks "the childish titillation of riming"; but Daniel[4] in reply defended the practice with great competence. Although classical imitation and influence was, thanks to Jonson, on the increase, there appear to have been no further rhymeless attempts by notable poets, excepting Milton, for over a century.

Milton's rendering "almost word for word without

[1] *Manual of English Prosody.*
[2] *Short Hist. of Eng. Lit.*
[3] *Observations in the Art of English Poesie.*
[4] *A Defence of Ryme*, 1603.

rhyme according to the Latin measure" of the Fifth Ode of Horace is perhaps insignificant; but the fact that many of the choruses of *Samson* are unrhymed is of the greatest importance. There are no stanzas (as in *Rose-cheeked Laura*) and the lines though metrical are irregular. Assonance is even more spasmodic than rhyme and may be overlooked more easily, as in:

> "The brute and boist'rous *force* of violent men
> Hardy and industrious to *support*
> Tyrannic power, but raging to *pursue*
> The righteous and all such as honour *Truth*;"

or

> "Heads without name no more remember'd
> But such as Thou hast solemnly elected
> With gifts and graces eminently adorn'd
> To some great work, Thy glory,
> And peoples safety which in part they effect:"

(where lines 1, 2 and 5 and 3 and 4 are respectively correspondent). The pattern which underlies and holds together these choruses (lyrical, according to most definitions) is intricate contrapuntal rhythm, not previously used in lyric.

Isaac Watts can be credited with the first memorable Sapphics in English. Many others, including Cowper, Southey (*Needy Knifegrinder* by Frere and Canning is a parody of his *Cold was the night wind*), Swinburne, and in our own day Miss Pitter have followed; but the interesting thing about such experiments is not the rhymelessness but the metre. The same may be said about English hendecasyllabics (Coleridge and Tennyson), galliambics (Tennyson and Meredith), alcaics (Tennyson) and especially hexameters; they illustrate the English impatience of classical form; when they are correct they are (save by a tour de force) unnatural, when they are natural they are wrong. The stumbling-block is apparently the dactyl, but that does not concern us here.

The Ode to Evening appeared in 1747. Its perfection has long been recognized. It has been suggested that its success lies largely in the substitution of assonance for rhyme: there are, it has been shown, very few terminal

vowel sounds that are not matched by others somewhere in the poem. Many of these must, I fear, be ruled out—the interval is too great—the ear cannot retain them. Assonance there certainly is and it may be internal as (on the long ē and short ă) in

> " Then lead, calm vot'ress, where some sheety lake
> Cheers the lone heath, on some time-hallowed pile
> Or uplands fallows grey
> Reflect the last cool gleam " ;

but it is of a very irregular and independable sort. The chief technical points leading to the admirable fusion of form and content are, I think, the shape of the stanza (the shorter lines retard the movement), the preponderance of monosyllables ; assonance and alliteration being used as a very slight pattern woven into the deft vowel music and consonantal undertone. (There is, it might be mentioned, a not unsuccessful imitation by William Stanley Roscoe, 1752–1841, entitled *To Spring*. See the *Oxford Book of Victorian Verse*.)

Rather unimportant are attempts at unrhymed choruses by Richard Glover[1] and Frank Sayers.[2] After the turn of the century Southey used the unrhymed Pindaric in *Thalaba* (1801) as did Shelley in his early *Queen Mab* (assuming both to be partly lyrical).

Hitherto our concern has been with writers greatly influenced by the classics. We must now turn to Whitman than whom few poets have been less bound by tradition. If others had shown that lyric need not necessarily be either rhyme-led or stanzaic, he went further, showing (in *Leaves of Grass*, 1855, etc.) that it need not even be metrical. It is interesting to note that in many of his more inspired outbursts there is a tendency towards metre—in *Come lovely and soothing death* or

> " Out of the cradle endlessly rocking,
> Out of the mocking-bird's throat the musical shuttle,"

but it is rarely sustained for long. *O Captain ! my Captain !* of course is in fairly regular rhymed stanzas. Whitman's rhymes, mostly internal, are not so rare as is

[1] *The Medea*, 1763. [2] *Dramatic Sketches of Northern Mythology*, 1790.

generally supposed; nor are they without their value. The "rocking" and "mocking" in "Out of the cradle" are typical; and here is a complete poem from *Memories of President Lincoln*:

> "This *dust* was once the *man*,
> Gentle, plain, *just* and resolute, under whose cautious *hand*
> Against the foulest crime in history known in any *land* or *age*
> Was *saved* the Union of the *States*."

(with italic to mark rhyme and assonance—two examples in each line!) Assonance, I find, is fairly frequent, as in

> "You *chords* left as by vast composers—you *choruses*,
> You *form*less, free, religious dances—you from the *Orient*."[1]

But when all is said there are fine lyrics like *The Beasts* and *The Hand-Mirror* which have none of these devices: there is rhythm only.

For another nineteenth-century poet of interest to us we must return to England, academic circles and classical tradition. Matthew Arnold's *The Strayed Reveller* appeared six years before *Leaves of Grass*. Arnold hesitated throughout his poetic period, sometimes using conventional forms, sometimes in his search for severity resorting to unrhymed, jerky, highly equivalenced lines (his ear is said to have been spoilt by French verse). His rhymeless attempts seem less an anticipation of the new than an outcome of the disintegration of the old. But their very uncertainty (and he himself was at times dissatisfied with them[2]) perhaps qualifies them for being a suitable medium for his pessimism and lack of spiritual conviction. I say "perhaps," since the expression seems completer when rhymed, as in *Dover Beach*. *Rugby Chapel*, however, and *The Future* ("A wanderer is man from his birth") are undeniably of poetic importance.

Some translations, I think, apart from the Bible—deserve mention. Here is one from the Chinese:

> "The heart, eagerly bent, fleets to the mark like an arrow.
> The bark runneth along the water, swifter than the shuttle
> Over the loom of a weaver who is in haste to finish his work."

[1] *Proud Music of the Storm* (note Stanza I of *On the Beach at Night*).

[2] He said of *Merope* (in a letter): "The chorus rhythms are unsatisfactory, I admit, but I cannot yet feel that rhyme would do." 1865.

This is not by Mr. Waley, nor Mr. Pound, nor even Bridges: it is one of several published in 1761 by Bishop Percy,[1] who obtained them through French versions. Exactly a hundred years later, in a volume of Calderon's plays translated from the Spanish occur these words: "The peculiar feature, then, of this translation is its rigid adherence to the metres of the original, and particularly to that especially Spanish one, the *asonante* vowel rhyme, of which but a few scattered specimens exist in English, and these rather as samples of what our language is incapable of producing to any considerable extent, than of what it could achieve." Although Denis Florence MacCarthy was often incorrect in practice (he makes "matter" correspond to "answer," for instance) and a very minor poet, he is of interest here as being (it seems) the first poet consciously to use assonance in English (as in Portuguese, Spanish and Old French) as a substitute for rhyme.

But the first to do it with power was an American. In the poems of Emily Dickinson (which, like Hopkins', appeared posthumously) there also occur the first consummate examples of half-rhyme (used previously in Icelandic). Here are two stanzas from a poem of hers (the other two, which follow, resemble the second in having both full end-rhymes and assonance):

> "There's a certain slant of light
> On winter afternoons,
> That oppresses, like the weight
> Of cathedral tunes.
>
> Heavenly hurt it gives us;
> We can find no scar
> But internal difference
> Where the meanings are."

It is doubtful whether Wilfred Owen, who re-discovered the possibilities of half-rhyme, ever used it more subtly than she in the first of these stanzas. In both poets it is often accompanied by assonance and rhyme, the latter especially being used for rounding off.

[1] In an appendix to a Chinese novel, *Hau Kiou Choan*.

There are other poets of the last century—how many I cannot say—who in some of their lyrics abandoned rhyme, but apparently for no artistic purpose. A few such poems can be found in the anthologies—*Scorned* by Alexander Smith (1829–1867) and Longfellow's *To an Old Danish Song-Book*; and you can, if you like to follow Mr. Yeats, write out some Pater as free verse.

In reviewing our specimens, it may be said that before 1900 a small number of good lyrics were written almost or entirely without the help of rhyme. Some of these, like *Rose-cheeked Laura* and *The Ode to Evening*, are in form hardly more than ordinary stanzaic poems divested of rhyme. They have no remarkable successors, nor (it seems) are likely to; and the same may be said of experiments in classical prosody (Watts, Tennyson, etc.), of rhymeless Pindarics (Southey and the Shelley of *Queen Mab*) and of Arnold's attempts. But there are others (Milton's, Whitman's, Emily Dickinson's) which serve as precedents for many a modern lyric. The paucity of successful attempts before this century, however, is noticeable.

To-day it is different. "Full end-rhyme," says Mr. Michael Roberts,[1] "is felt by many modern poets to be too arbitrary and too noisy for serious poetry, unless modified, as Hopkins modifies it, by taking some of the stress off the last syllable of the line either by stressing earlier syllables, or by placing the emphasis of meaning, as distinct from metre, elsewhere. (In sprung rhythm, where the lines are rove over, the rhymes tend to be quieter.[2]) If they use end-rhymes at all it is often for satiric purposes, or in a modified form, rhyming stressed with unstressed syllables." But "few poets," he adds, "abandon it entirely."

Among the more important substitutes so far used with success are assonance, half-rhyme and certain rhythms—the counterpoint of Milton, for instance—or those of the translators of the Bible, or Whitman's. Specimens of all these are to be found before this century, but are rather isolated.

[1] Introduction to the *Faber Book of Modern Verse*, 1936.
[2] These words in brackets are mine.

In summing up, it may be said that a lyric can exist without rhyme (or its substitutes), and even without analysable metre, but generally at least one of these devices is called upon to give pattern. Rhyme, hitherto the rule in English lyric, is to-day frequently discarded, or used but sparingly, or in ways uncommon before this century; substitutes having been found which may have subtler or more appropriate effects; but it is still felt to be extremely valuable for special purposes, not least to make poetry more memorable.

TERENCE HEYWOOD.

STONE FENCES

I HAVE seen
Old fences built of stones
Picked up by pioneers
And have felt
The bleak, bare heart-break
Of work that scars
And sears;

I have heard
The sigh of a heavy sky
Till my very soul cried out:
"Oh, with all
Our Age's wisdom, can't
We know what we're
About?"

And the poor
Old fences' answer: "We're
The heaped up hopes of the years"!—
Yet there is
A light of loveliness
We see through all
Our tears.

HELEN DOUGLAS ROBINSON.

THE RIDDLE

I NEVER robbed his brother's eye,
Yet Neptune, baleful, shipwrecked me.
I never looked behind my back,
Yet Pluto keeps me prisoner;
I ate not one pomegranate seed,
Yet he binds winter and my spring;
From Ceres' side I did not wander,
Yet the groaning ground shakes under.
I never laid my cheek against
The swelling shoulder of the bull,
But One has taken me from where
Friends with frozen fear stare.
Though I vowed hecatombs and spilt
Libations from each cup of wine,
She did not come, cerulean-eyed
Minerva,—never succoured me.
That day that I was faint and weak
From hunger long unsatisfied,
I did not slay, I never slew
The snowy oxen of the Sun.
I did not once with open eye
Gaze on my love beneath his kiss,
Yet he did no more visit me,
Only the stars looked down.
I hid my eyes, when white and cool
Artemis bathed her in the pool,
Yet stag-like I was hunted still,
Hounded by fiercer wolves of will.
I never stole the car of day
And drove the horses of the Sun,
But drowned as surely is my heart
Beneath some amber dropping tree.
When Apollo followed me,
I stood, and did not fly from him;
No laurels left he for my head,—
He turned when he saw love instead.
These are all things too hard for me,
Riddles, and I have no key.

BRENDA F. SKENE.

MAY THE THIRTEENTH

WHERE joy and sorrow meet
And make a breathless sound
I found myself; and found,
Near the turn of the street,
This flower trodden to ground
By the passers-by,—
A child deserving of the sky
To this prison bound.
I loved the sweet of her eye
Hidden by weariness;
Where was the God to guess
A name with not a human tie,
One life only to delight?
God reward your heart,
Before you've played that earthly part,
You whose midday was midnight!

In the shadow of Shoreditch
I saw a beggar, blind,
And no one eager, none kind
To speed him on his way; the rich
Cast their eyes away—
As their elders taught them,
As their rites besought them.
Passing, I was moved to say
Anything to console; but he
Crushed the worm of pity
With cruel scorn, and through the city
Picked his way. And we
Fled the shaming light.
God reward your heart
Who played so poor a part,
You whose midday was midnight!
To London, to the forest
Of hungry houses, starving trees
Striving for light, come pageantries
Paid for by the poorest;
Come the unpaid, unwanted—
To find primeval Nature
Unveiling every ugly feature;

She, whose elders haunted
The chivalrous countryside,
  Took flight into the towns ;
  There joy with sorrow frowns ;
And Supernature died,
Lost in the net of ways
  Ever narrowing to no end ;
  And bitter Nature finds a friend
And spends uproarious days ;
And every dog is taught to bite . . .
  God reward your heart,
  Bitter from the start,
You whose midday was midnight !

Over London bricks
  And through the lowering night
  I see the city alight,
Floodlit from Thames to Styx ;
Miles away a steeple glows
  Like a candle flame,
  And towers crumbling into fame
Break the peace that Heaven owes ;
There, out of a mist,
  Looms in white the perfect dome,
  Happy in its home ;
And happy, further East,
The homeless poor, drunk with light . . .
  God reward your heart
  With the drugging light of art,
You whose midday was midnight !

The sun's level looks
  At dawn, across the field,
  Bless the yellow yield
That stands upright and fences brooks
Where the storks bathe and brood ;
  And, as if to reward
  Those by noon ignored,
He gilds the lowest leaves in a wood—

See them! they outshine
The leaves above, and seem
To hold you back in a dream
Where stars on fire line
The boughs and overpower the sight . . .
God reward your heart
With level light from poles apart,
You whose noon shall be midnight!

EDWARD LOWBURY.

I SHALL SPREAD MY WINGS

I WAS lighter than the air,
But still I could not move;
Although I was aware
Of passing life, to prove
I was alive; and I
Could tell my shedding sheathe
Was leaving me to die;
Yet I was still beneath.

I'd always thought to yield
My body here and go
Away to some far field;
But found it was not so.
It was my body went,
Not I, just like a leaf
Breaks loose and then all spent,
Lets go and feels no grief.

Just as the bud remained,
So I was living still;
And all I ever gained
I had but to fulfil
As bud to leaf again
Will find what new life brings;
And though not one with men,
I, too, shall spread my wings.

MARIE TELLO PHILLIPS.

LICHENS AND MOSS

LICHENS and moss,
The humblest of green things that live,
The first-born mercy earth can give,
Veiling its dintless rocks,
The ruin's scarrèd locks
Re-covering with strange and tender grace,
Encircling with a dainty lasting lace.

Lichens and moss,
The starred lines of rubied bloom
As if rock spirits on a tomb
Were spinning amber fringe
Or some wan ghost would singe
With burnished tracery his borrowed hair,
The fitful brightness seeming partly air.

Lichens and moss,
When other services are vain,
When tree will shelter not again,
The lichen takes its guard
At stony post so hard;
The body enters Death's most darksome cave:
Corn for the life of man; moss for his grave.

Lichens and moss,
Unfading and motionless all,
No heat will blanch or frost appal;
Slow-fingered, they will weave,
Where storms will never heave
A breath to break their everlasting nest,
Slow-pencilled, endless images of rest.

Lichens and moss,
Still as the unimpassioned rock
That hardly feels the earthquake shock,
The lichen on the stone,
Star-like, remains alone;
Whilst blossom scatters like the drifting snow,
The orange face of mountain will not go.

T. PITTAWAY.

ANNUNCIATION

I WALKED my ways in stillness—in my heart
A knowledge growing ; like a secret spring
It swelled and gathered into certainty.
And terror straight assailed my inmost part—
My mind refused the fateful whispering,
Resentful of a creeping tyranny.
A surging heat protested in my blood
Against this primal load of womanhood !

But soon, in vision plain—how blest am I
Who bear the weight of man's immortal case,
Unchanged, through changing favour, to remain !
Triumphant Eve, beneath whose heart doth lie
All Being's answer and all Questioning's face,
In whom Life spends itself—by whom made new again !

MARGUERITE JOHANSEN.

RAIN

FALL, fall from your uttermost heights ! Lamentingly,
Rain, in uncounted legions hasten to earth,
While the sky puts off his mirth,
And the sun's face in a cloud is hid repentingly.

Grey is the sky, the shadows are greyly creeping,
The river is grey, but flecked with a slatey sheen
Where the ghosts of trees are seen
Like a dead world the other side of sleeping.

No bird flies from the copse, no creature
Stirs to life from the dark holes in the ground ;
All but the stealthy sound
Of your falling is hushed, composed is every feature.

Silent as death is the air, no wind uproarious
Blows any longer in wrath or hatred or fear ;
Heaven and earth are clear
Of passion, now, and of life with its pulses glorious.

Born in a cloud, each rain-drop's course goes quickly
Down to earth entombing, even as I

Shall fall at the last and lie
Unknown, where the trembling grasses cluster thickly.

Quickly down : but after the rain has vanished,
Renewed, rejoicing, leaps through earth and air
Singing life ; and the bare
Ground is decked and the pallors of death are banished.

Life leaps up, and though the rain-drops perish
Their strength remains, to unite with the strength of the sun
In fashioning beauty, to run
To the tips of flowers, and their grace and vigour to cherish.

HUGH THOMAS.

EARTH

O WHY do you not speak, Earth ?
You ask not to be ploughed,
You ask not for the seed.
O why do you not speak, Earth ?

Turgid, tingling, taut,
You are itching for the plough,
You are dying for the seed,
Only you do not speak, Earth.

God, the ploughman,
Bends down to you on his plough,
God, the sower, impatient with seed,
Waiting only for you to speak, Earth.

Must he plough, the ploughman ?
Must he sow, the sower ?
God, the ploughman, God, the sower ?
He may not if you do not speak, Earth.

You know not that you know,
You know not, you more than know,
He shall plough, He shall sow,
That is why you do not speak, Earth.

S. S. SEKHON.

Khalsa College, Amritsar.

Æ, POET, PAINTER AND MYSTIC

I WAS indeed greatly interested to hear that a posthumous work by my long time friend George W. Russell, who was still better known to the public as Æ,[1] had been issued by Messrs. Macmillan & Co. Ltd., and although contrary to my expectation of finding a successor to that charming fantasy, *The Avatars*, or *Song and its Fountains*, before receiving it, I was not entirely disappointed with the discovery that *The Living Torch*, ably edited by Monk Gibbon, mainly consisted of a number of carefully selected essays which had appeared in the *Irish Statesman*, and in style so very characteristic of that dead poet and mystic, together with a collection of his hitherto unpublished aphorisms.

I had often thought that it would be a great loss not only to students of literature and those interested in political philosophy, but to the reading public in general, if those creations of such literary merit should be allowed to remain dormant in the files of that defunct journal. In fact, I remember upon one occasion asking Æ if he ever intended bringing out in volume form a selection of those contributions he considered worthy of preservation, and he replied to the effect that most of them were written very rapidly, and " upon the spur of the moment," and he appeared to underestimate their literary value.

On certain occasions I have known him at The Hermetic Society to dilate upon some interesting matter outside philosophy that would occasionally arise, with the same easy flow of words so habitual with him ; and then a week or so later I would see an article almost word for word, as he had delivered it, appear on the same subject, in the *Irish Statesman*.

For example he would discuss poetry and the poetic faculty, and was more conversant with that " music of the soul " than any person I had ever met. He would repeat from memory long passages from any one of the known poets both major and minor, or any poem or lyric he deemed worthy of remembrance.

[1] I prefer like W. B. Yeats to use the diphthong instead of A.E. as it was from the Greek word Æon that he adopted the pseudonym, although it is more frequently printed A.E.

He had his own theory regarding poetic inspiration according to which poets and seers may attract to themselves the accumulated beauty of the enraptured musings of generations of poets out of what he termed " the book of life," that is the memory of nature, where all thoughts and worldly events are recorded.

A great deal of modern poetry or more strictly speaking modernist poetry seemed to him " ashes and dust " when he tried to absorb it. He once wrote to Herbert Palmer, " I read a volume of ultra modern verse a day or two ago and thought I was in a mad house."[1]

To him a psychic unity of minds, " a coalescing of the subconscious of many," was a sort of Oversoul, and the loftiest poetry where there is both beauty and harmony is not earth-born, but emanates from a divine world, for those dreaming rhapsodies of great poets had each the heritage of some ancient and God-given truth such as " Rapt Isaiah's wild seraphic fire " or Blake when he explored " the infinite labyrinth of the soul " and wrote at times what sounds like heavenly music, such as

> Bring me my Bow of burning gold !
> Bring me my arrows of desire !
> Bring me my Spear ! O clouds, unfold !
> Bring me my Chariot of fire !

which Æ was so fond of reciting ; and he said that every perception of beauty is " vision with the Divine eye," and believed with Socrates that in the poet there is a diamon who speaks through him truths from a profounder life than the conscious, and also how in the creating of every great poem there is more than is conscious in the mind of the poet than is known to himself, and that there is an idea of ourselves in the Divine Imagination, and it is only by intense brooding on what is beautiful can we come to those depths of poetry in ourselves.

I have heard him take Swinburne as an instance of this phenomenon whose soul he likened in one of his essays to " a fiery crucible in which the elements became dissociated

[1] In *The Living Torch* he is quoted thus : " My trouble with Modernist Poetry is . . . that when the obscurities surrender to concentration of thought, the reward is hardly worth the effort."

from the gross and solid," and who had little of the spiritual element in his nature; and he drew our attention to a chorus in *Atalanta in Calydon* where that poet appeared to have had some spiritual intuition when he wrote

> And the high gods took in hand
> Fire, and the falling of tears
> And a measure of sliding sand
> From under the feet of the years, etc.

" Fire " symbolized the souls of mankind, and " the falling of tears " as the woes of coming earthly existence " before the first bridal of soul with body" which like Prometheus—Greek forethinker—all souls had foreseen, " before the first bridal of soul with body," when each human ego lived in a state of absolute consciousness but inactive which in the Ancient world stories is called the Golden Age, and this state of blissful innocence was followed by the descent of the soul into matter represented by the myth of the rebellion in Heaven, which " a measure of sliding sand " also " dust of labouring years " in a later verse signifies, and on and on, life after life with death between each, meaning successive reincarnations.

For my part I consider it quite possible that Swinburne, who was one of the foremost Greek scholars of his day, took his idea from the pre-Hellenic myth of Chronos[1] under whose rule man lived in a state of Paradisial innocence, together with the myth of Prometheus whom Zeus employed to make men out of mud and water, and in pity for their state he stole fire from heaven and bestowed it upon them. Yet I doubt that he was aware of the Promethean myth according to esoteric philosophy which symbolizes whole hosts of beings which represent the world's populations before birth, who came like the Titans to earth with fire born in heaven.

Æ, who regarded this present age as the lowest segment of the wheel, or circle, of Time, called it " The Iron Age " :

> How has the fire Prometheus paled?
> Who is there now who wills or dares
> Follow the fearless ships who sailed

[1] Meaning Time, son of Uranus (heaven) and Gæa (earth).

Celestial adventurers
Who charted in undreamt of skies
The magic zones of Paradise.

He held that there is a divinity in man's nature, but this world of to-day is so material that the gods have departed, and the half-gods as well, and we still have autocracy in industry as firmly seated on its throne as theocratic kings ruling in the name of a god. In one of his essays, "Prometheus Bound," he writes of that mighty drama of Aeschylus illustrative of the mind of mankind as distinguished from the animals, viz. involution and its awakening in man when it discovers the divine powers, but finds itself bound in chains so that mind cannot free itself, yet prefers a state of self-consciousness to a past ancient mindless happiness.

John Eglington, who was one of Æ's oldest friends, in his extremely interesting *A Memoir of A.E.* (Macmillan) gives a short outline of his philosophy which is more or less contained in what I have already stated to the effect that each individual soul had been in far remote ages outbreathed by Deity outside the Divine Circle of the Pleroma, that is the Spirit of the Logos, which is the God-world and began to create in fantasy the infinitude it had lost, and then its ultimate return to what he had named "The Bosom of the Father," which is the same God-world after countless reincarnations, and then again is in a state of absolute consciousness, but that only after having fulfilled its destiny whilst in the body, and time after time endured trials and afflictions, and perhaps being obliged to exist on this Plane of Being only by means of never ceasing toil and labour, according to the law of Karma, i.e. cause and effect, but it is only after having overcome "all the joys of the flesh and the sorrows that wear out the soul" can power increase to enable it "to storm the heavens," so as to regain its ancient heritage.

In the Devachanic existence, that is the ultimate goal, all the higher elements of man's nature will predominate on account of all the lower passions and desires acquired during earthly incarnations being extinguished. For there is the Spirit in man which transcends the Psyche, or soul,

as in our world the Psyche transcends the terrestrial ego on account of the Psyche having a dark nature, and that part of it has to fulfil its destiny whilst in the body, and that which is "dramatically sundered" becomes a part of the Ancient Spirit from whence all souls have come before involution in the body which he named The Self Ancestral.

People to whom this conception is entirely new will, as John Eglington says, call it "a cold uncanny creed," but one has to bear in mind that the ordinary mortal has little or no theory regarding the life to come, for "no man knoweth what thing cometh after death" as William Morris wrote. Æ found fault with Christianity—that is its doctrines as taught by the churches, and not Christianity itself—because it had no cosmogony, in fact most people's conception of a future state is restricted to what I term Sunday-school theology.[1]

Æ was perfectly convinced that there are higher worlds where the soul enters after death, and he had had glimpses as he often said into the Mind-world described by Plato, whose philosophy was advocated by St. Paul in his cosmogenic conceptions, and who wrote in the *Phaedo* that "we all live in the hollow of the earth where all regions

[1] One is reminded here of two of Kipling's verses:

Beyond the path of outmost sun through utter darkness hurled,
Further than ever comet flared or vagrant star-dust swirled,
Live such as fought and sailed and ruled and loved and made our world.

And oft-times cometh our wise Lord God Master of every trade,
And tells them tales of his daily toil, of Eden's newly made,
And they rise to their feet as He passes by, gentlemen unafraid.

He was fond of quoting from Blake's *The Everlasting Gospel*.

If thou humblest Thyself, Thou humblest Me.
Thou also dwell'st in Eternity.
Thou art a man: God is no more:
Thy own Humanity learn to adore,
For that is My spirit of life.
Awake, arise to spiritual strife,
And Thy revenge abroad display
In terrors at the last Judgment Day,

The epithet of the "Creeping Jesus" meant what Christ was not, but would if he had been Antichrist

He'd have done anything to please us
Gone sneaking into synagogues
And not used the Elders and Priests like dogs;
But humble, as a lamb or ass,
Obeyed Himself to Caiaphas.

have been spoilt or corroded " but there is a world above and beneath the sky which is the real earth, and " is made up of colours more beautiful than we have yet seen ", and that " the precious stones in this world of ours are but mere fragments of its pebbles " and " its inhabitants use the air as we use water and the sea, and the ether as we use the air." Here "we live like frogs around a marsh, and look forth like fishes from the sea, and behold our world." And this supra-world where, as Æ wrote, " the gods most surely dwell ", is related to the physical earth as the soul is to the body, for what he himself had seen confirmed the words of Plato who was one of his favourite writers.

He had told us of how in his boyhood when upon some lonely hillside far above the haunts of men, where the air is rarefied and like the pure breath from heaven, for Earth he believed, as did the Greek philosopher Heraclitus, is energized by the Logos, and revealed herself to him as living being, through the transparencies of rock and clay he saw pure and shining forms of ineffable beauty, which carried out the Greek conception of the psyche, or soul which is akin to αιόλος meaning coloured, iridescent, the word ψυχη meaning in addition to soul butterfly, it being of many brilliant colours.

In *A Memoir of A.E.*, John Eglington states that what he calls Æism was an attempt to supply the antiquity of Ireland with a coherent system of transcendental belief, and I desire to explain as far as I am enabled, what was actually in Æ's mind concerning the Ancient Irish mythologies. He was, as many are aware, steeped in Irish tradition and legend, being convinced that those " oracles of the oversoul " have not lost their ancient significance by the passing of time, but had on the contrary gained thereby on account of what he deemed to be arcane energies, having filled with dreams of beauty the manifold nature of mankind which are anigh to the Divine Power from whence they emanate, just as they had done through the long ages, and that far remote period when the Aryan civilizations had branched off and became one of the early stems of the great Celtic race whose group mind held an affinity with the

unseen hierarchics, having found symbols of eternal beauty as well as the heroic spirit in Deirdre and Cuchulain, the same world-loveliness and "flashing deeds of light" that Homer sang of when Greece was young.

The divinity of nature held by the ancient Celts in their Druidic lore was to his mystical mind a tenet of faith. Earth to him was the Great Mother of mankind, from the very dawn of time when the Logos, the Anima Mundi formed the world out of chaos, which Æ called primordial substance, and Mind, which is consciousness or soul, united with matter, gave birth to the first living cell in those far remote Æons. The Spirit of the Logos[1] had been outbreathed by the Universal Creative Power, which is Deity, and this earth became in course of ages a nucleus, and is still surrounded by Planes of Being analogous to man's soul and spirit, as the earth is to his body.[2] Nature, which is Dana of Celtic Mythology, and is, as he put it, a force and continual motion, and Nature according to the ancient conception is a manifestation of Spirit and is incarnating in the minds of individuals to-day who seek to attain to the higher cultural levels.

He wrote thus when beneath the stars, which he named teachers,

> These myriad eyes which look to me are mine;
> Wandering beneath them I have found again
> The ancient ample moment, the divine,
> The God-root within men.

For what he termed the great life was one of ceaseless endeavour even upon the other side of the portals of death, having begun his labours in this life when on Earth, he will continue at what the "Master of all good workmen" shall put him to work anew after having passed through

[1] In my article in the *Occult Review* for July-September 1936 I go very deeply into his system of philosophy.

[2] The Logos—Going back through the outmost confines of religious thought we find in what Æ called the oracles of the Oversoul, being the revelation of the Divine wisdom to mankind in the remote ages, that the Assyrian god Nebo had many attributes of the Logos, and in Ancient Egyptian cosmogony "Divinity first thinks and then utters the word." In Greek philosophy it was the Logos—the Mind Spirit, which gave system and order to the processes of the whole world of matter. He would often quote the familiar first verse of the first chapter of St. John the Evangelist, beginning with Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ Λόγος καὶ ὁ Λόγος etc.

The Ivory Gate. He would indeed have withstood and ultimately forsaken all the magic charms and allurements of feminine beauty for that one end. It is thus he leaves " A Symbol of the world's desire."

> Away ! the great life calls. I leave
> For Beauty, Beauty's rarest flower ;
> For Truth, the lips that ne'er deceive,
> For Love, I leave Love's haunted bower.

The great life of Beauty, Truth, Goodness and Love called him, and he answered the call with persistent energy, for he always had both the hope and desire of gaining fresh knowledge and experience after attaining in the after life to higher realms in the illimitable Cosmos where those four great attributes of the Absolute would open up fresh vistas through which his soul would journey onwards.

And yet he felt that this pilgrimage would have to be repeated again and yet again many, many times before the final consummation. I can in my imagination hear him quote Walt Whitman who as a poet seemed to have had some intuition of this concept :—

> They prepare for death yet are they not the finish, but rather the outset.
> They bring home to his or her terminus or to be content and full,
> Whom they take they take into space to behold the birth of stars, to learn one of their meanings
> To launch off with absolute faith, to sweep through the ceaseless rings and never be quiet again.

" It was," he said, " like Ulysses, who in Tennyson's poem exclaimed,

> 'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.
> Push off, and sitting well in order smite
> The sounding furrows ; for my purpose holds
> To sail beyond the sunset, and the paths
> Of all the western stars, until I die."

I agree with John Eglington when he writes that the recovery of mankind of his true estate, that forsaken Eden of which the Garden of Eden myth appears in some sense to typify, was what Æ believed to be his errand amongst men, and that is the trend of his poems and is dealt with frequently in his prose works. I do not at the same time

believe that he regarded myths such as for instance the Titans and rebel angels, as actual happenings, no more than he believed the story of Adam and Eve to be historical.

He explicitly states in *Myth and Folk-tale* that what is known of myths proves that they are not primitive at all, but the decayed fragments of once great religions, and by a system of concentration he was enabled in some degree to arrive at their hidden meanings. This habit of concentration was a great help to his intellect, and cleared his mind of all obstructions in his quest of knowledge and truth.

He states in one of his books that images and ideas of this Earth-world come up to the higher world we call Heaven, in the same way as a great poet transfigures the things his eyes have seen, and lives in a sort of Heaven-world of his own making, so that the most beautiful things the soul when in the body had seen on Earth may be idealized beyond all human conception, and have a transcendental existence.

A. P. Sinnett in *The Occult World* puts forward the Esoteric doctrine that this Mind-world, the Paradise which Christ spoke of, and of many mansions, is a resting-place, and entirely subjective, but Æ desired more than the ecstatic experience of a soul in a real sphere of being, his aim was to start afresh upon some labour in order to become master of the nature by which he found himself surrounded, and then onward to higher realms so as to become more and more conscious of the Eternal in that quest of his spirit for the Universal Spirit, which he had begun when upon Earth and " filled with home yearnings for the celestial cities and starry regions of the soul "

> —drowsily he flings
> From his deep heart high dreams and mystic moods,
> Mixed with the memory of the loved earth-things ;
> Clothing the vest with a familiar face
> Reaching his right hand forth to greet the starry race.

He was one of the Celestial adventurers mentioned in his poem *The Iron Age*.

Upon one occasion he wrote to Ernest Rhys : " It is the spirit in which a thing is done that counts. I can imagine

some quite humble task being done which to a crowd of witnesses might outshine the glory radiating from the finest lyric ever written in our time," but the road of life that Æ's parents had desired him to take was not his Dharma,—a Sanskrit word meaning the whole duty and performance of that duty,—as he felt that he could not conscientiously undertake duties which, even apart from ethical reasons, were outside of the true line of active endeavour which he felt perfectly convinced was the path he was destined to follow; although it was going to be both uphill and difficult. And yet at the same time by virtue of his exploring the profundities of the Upanishads, Patañjali[1] and other Vedic Scriptures as well as that extraordinary work *The Secret Doctrine*, all of which correlated with what he felt to be some inborn faculty, after a long day's work for which he received a very modest salary, and at the same time the daily task must have proved most uncongenial to a young man of his temperament; still the knowledge he had acquired became a source of guidance throughout his whole life, and this he would impart to those who were willing to hear sentences flow from his life replete with wisdom and vitality.

In addition there was poetry, "the only thing in life Russell cared about," to quote John Eglinton.

The Hermetic Society, over which he presided, and named after Hermes Trismegistos, the Greek name for the Egyptian god Thoth, and of which coterie I was for several years a member, consisted of a group of his "disciples," or more properly speaking his adult philosophical students. We were a decidedly mixed gathering as far as we differed ostensibly as regards accident of birth, or else it was on account of an ante-natal determination to be born into some particular sect under the general heading of Christianity, before undertaking the daring adventure of coming to Earth as described in the cave myth in Plato's *Republic*. We differed no doubt in politics for a similar reason, as a few were ardent Irish Republicans, some more moderate Nationalists, in fact Free Staters, whilst others of us acknow-

[1] Lived in second century B.C. Pronounced Pataunjalee.

ledged England more or less as the ruling power of a United Kingdom, and loyal Ireland was entitled to at least half sovereign patronage; but to many that half Regime under the Crown was not so important as the person of the Monarch, for half a crown in impoverished Ireland meant very much less than half-a-sovereign. (I have digressed in order to show how such conflicting elements had all met in equanimity at each symposium, when Æ would sometimes regale our craving intellects with philosophical morsels from Plato's Banquet.) There was a lady member who was the sister of a military peer of the realm, and in contrast another, a male member, who had been "on the run" during the rebellion of 1916. There was a late secretary to one of England's sworn enemies at the time, as well as others I have mentioned whose views were strongly republican. Poets, painters, journalists and others all interested themselves in the deepest of philosophic teaching, and we all met upon an equal footing the same as we shall it is hoped meet regardless of crypts, creeds and politics in a super-world. I remember at the time of the civil war his reading to us one evening a portion of his forthcoming book, *The Interpreters*, from the proofs, which described a threatened revolt in some city of the future, and the arrest of the leaders who are supposed to be in prison awaiting execution, and they pass the time in philosophical conversation after the manner of the dialogues of Plato. He read a very graphic account of a bombardment, and strangely enough as I walked homewards I suddenly found myself in the midst of an ambush, and a very real fight was taking place between Free-staters and Republicans, so I was obliged to take cover underground with numbers of others like sardines in a tin until "the storm" blew over. It was a curious coincidence to have heard a description of an imaginative battle and then afterwards to walk into an actual skirmish.

I have often heard him speak of his friend James Pryse, who appears by all accounts to have exercised a sort of hypnotic influence over him, and he has related to us some very strange happenings such as when Pryse showed, or

conjured up, a vision of the psychic body with its glowing centres. A full account of this psychic double I gave in *The Occult Review*; also pictures and an ancient script which were displayed to him in the astral light, called in Sanskrit Akasha.

I can remember his telling us how Pryse before a certain group produced a globe of light; still this may, or may not have been an outcome of collective hallucination. Such phenomena I have heard of taking place amongst overwrought groups of religious enthusiasts. The late Andrew Lang gave an account of these globes of fire many years ago in some review.[1]

Miss Susan Mitchell who helped Æ largely in his editorship of the *Irish Statesman*—to which journal I myself contributed on occasions—would often attend our meetings. She was related to old friends of my father's family, one of whom gave me a copy of her book of poems called *The Living Chalice*. I have a pleasant recollection of spending an evening at her home, when we discussed *The Player Queen* by W. B. Yeats, which was being produced at the Abbey Theatre at the time. As well as being a distinguished Irish poetess she wrote several books, including one dealing with George Moore, and she was in addition a clever parodyist. Many of her poems had a tendency towards mysticism. I told her one evening in the presence of Æ of my having seen the last of a cousin of her own whom I had known since boyhood. He had succumbed to a dangerous illness and was unconscious when I left his bedside; and whilst waiting at my own home, which was near at hand, to be sent for at any moment by his nurse, there suddenly occurred an unexpected happening of a physical nature which superstitious minded people look upon as a death presage. I took a careful note of the time, and was shortly afterwards sent for to find he had passed away at the time I had noted.

[1] Æ brought one evening to the Hermetic Society a book written by Pryse which dealt with the Apocalypse of St. John viewed from an esoteric standpoint and it was an endeavour to prove the whole conception of that cryptic book to be the pilgrimage of the soul before reaching the God-world, and commencing with the initiates' entry unto one or other of the ancient mysteries. It did not impress me at the time, consequently the whole line of his argument I have forgotten.

I personally regarded the occurrence as a curious coincidence, but Miss Mitchell was greatly impressed and believed that the deceased wanted to communicate with me in some way; but Æ pooh-poohed the whole affair as if it were nonsensical to regard the matter as supernormal; for he, despite his philosophy, was the reverse of superstitious. As a matter of fact the nurse told me that when the patient had recovered consciousness and heard that I had called and gone away, he seemed very disappointed, and showed signs that he had some matter of importance to communicate.

Notwithstanding Æ's attitude towards popular superstitions he himself believed that the invisible universe is dense with spirits, and that those who have passed away think of the living, and may telepathically create an impression of their presence, but as for the movement by spirits of physical objects he was entirely sceptical.

His short essay on Bernard Shaw in addition to those on persons I have mentioned—in which he refers to him "as the last saint sent out of the Island of Saints to impart vitality to the intellectually torpid nations," strikes one as being very apt, particularly after one has read Shaw's preface to *Back to Methuselah* in which he calls Æ's "intellectually torpid people" "mindless forgotten nonentities" who existed in his time and generations previous to that; but it took Bernard Shaw several years of hard and unremitting brain-labour to rouse up that whole genera of the ursus labiatus[1]—as I might call it—by holding the stage before them in which he mirrored their respective natures, and they were so delighted with the true pictures displayed of their next door neighbours, he came into his own by means of "electrifying shocks." He shocked a wealthy and dogmatic uncle of his so much over the question of some monkeys having no tails like men, in his upholding the name of Darwin, that the old gentleman, as his nephew wrote, "died impenitent and left me out of his will."

I here heard Æ relate how he had heard the dramatist—who is no doubt "the giftie" whose power Robert Burns

[1] The sloth-bear.

longed for—read aloud portions of *Androcles and the Lion* at the time Shaw was writing that play, and declared that it was more amusing to hear the author, who varied the tones of his voice in representing the different characters, than seeing it performed, and that I can well imagine.

He declared that Shaw in spite of his refutation of all creeds, religious dogmas, and in fact all religions, had in the depths of his being something of the nature of the spiritual despite his seemingly irreligious remarks, and he drew our attention to the last act of *Back to Methuselah*, where Lilith speaks of men and women who " after passing a million goals they press on to the goal of redemption from the flesh, to the vortex freed from matter . . . yet I will not supercede them until they have forded the last stream that lies between flesh and spirit," which means I take it the entry of souls into the Spirit, or God-world of Æ's cosmogony.

Of this cosmogony, and Æ's mystic religious philosophy, I have only given a bare outline, but in addition to *The Occult Review*, in a series of six articles which recently appeared in *Light* I have gone very deeply into his whole system of philosophy, as well as in a review article on his *Selected Poems* in THE POETRY REVIEW, and as far as I am aware no such detailed accounts had hitherto appeared in print. Monk Gibbon has kindly mentioned my name when agreeing with me upon what I consider to be the key to Æ's whole philosophy.

The deceased poet, artist, mystic, economist, not to mention his other activities, was not what the world would term a Christian according to the established doctrines of orthodox churches,[1] but he was what I term a true Christian Ethicist, for nothing could conform more to Christian principles than his conduct throughout his whole life:

[1] His creed might be expressed in the verse from Swinburne's " Hertha " :

A creed is a rod,
And a crown is of night;
But this thing is God,
To be man with thy might,
To grow straight in the strength of thy spirit,
And live out thy life as the light.

or from the " Altar of Righteousness ".

Yet ere faith a wandering water froze and curdled into creeds,
Earth, elate as heaven adored the light that quickens dreams to deeds.

"The conduct that makes for righteousness" to quote Matthew Arnold, and he was always ready to stretch forth a willing hand to those who needed help. Like Austin Dobson's *Gentleman of the Old School*, "He liked the sermon on the Mount, the more he read it."

His kindliness and graciousness endeared him to all those who had the good fortune to be his friends, and those were many.

To him this life counted but an instant in the Divine scheme of the Cosmos; there is—"the great before and after, and the small now" as Browning wrote in *Sordello*,—and in the infinitudes of space and time,—although not as they are apprehended by us,—will all lofty ideals come true. He had his ideals here upon Earth as he laboured in order to prepare himself for the coming grandeur of accomplishments where beyond life's sunset there would dawn the morning of eternity he had long awaited, where his ideal of happiness fulfilled would be unceasing endeavour.

Both of these books are of outstanding literary value as they bring not only the personality and genius of the deceased poet and mystic into closer relation with the reading and thinking public, but give an insight into his wonderful scheme of philosophy, and as Monk Gibbon says in his admirable introduction, and which I cannot praise too highly, "A.E. may even be one of the forerunners of a new culture, in which mankind will find its spiritual rebirth," and I who not only having heard his philosophy, but devoted time to its study, can quite concur with this statement.

No lines of poetry I have ever read could better apply in his case than those written by Walter Savage Landor:

> I strove with none, for none was worth my strife;
> Nature I loved, and next to nature art.
> I warmed both hands before the fire of life,
> It sinks, and I am ready to depart.

H. T. HUNT GRUBB.

The competition for the annual RAWNSLEY MEMORIAL GOLD MEDAL for the Reading of Poetry (open to members of The Poetry Society) will be held on March 26th, entries to be received by March 10th.

TO A MAN

FROM earliest chaos of primordial slime
Came embryonic life;
And man was moulded through inhuman strife,
Hunter and hunted, to perish or to slay.
So up the blood-stained and inglorious climb
Of Civilization, carving out his way
With fearless arm, sure eye and surer knife;
Now by creative genius, now by crime,
Ennobling or debasing cosmic clay.

And sometimes comes in Time's vast cavalcade
A Man that men would be:
One who still battles with adversity,
Still lithe of limb, for fight and chase designed,
Still the swift hunter, strong and unafraid:
But more than this, for infinitely kind,
The gifts of science, healing, poetry,
All the world's wisdom, all its light and shade,
Are garnered in the storehouse of his mind.

P. E. C. Duce.

THE QUIET HOUSE

OPEN the door of the quiet house;
The warm smell of peat shall greet you in winter,
And in summer that indescribable lost scent of tulips.

Go into the hospitable house;
In the long brown room where the Vandyke hangs
Are all the silent backs of all the books
That ever gathered for a wayward taste.

And the coloured room for conversation—
With glasses gold bordered and lavish yellow flowers,
Yellow for sunlight, mirrors for lake water.

That you may sleep soundly in the quiet house,
A low bed in a green, empty room,
With mild lighting, marvellously hidden
Behind the cool milk figures of lalique,
Wrought in personal symbol, a dragon on the wall.

There must be clear conscience for such simplicity
And a natural heart,
Since, in the summer night the quiet house
Slips into the lavender garden,
And in winter all the ancient understanding country
Rises from the dark foot of the hill to engulf it.

Carla Lanyon Lanyon.

DYNAMICS OF AMERICAN POETRY: LXX

Much loved and widely published, Isabel Fiske Conant opens the winter list with her latest book, bearing the captivating title of *Aisle-Seat*, containing lyrics, sonnets and quatrains, (Mosher Press, Portland, Maine).

Mrs. Conant's characteristic credo is admirably given in the following, "Good Heart of Man":

Always the asking heart of man has wondered
Why he is here on earth,
Seeing the distant stars, by spaces sundered,
And each a world in worth.
Always his mind has groped among his reasons,
Nor found the answer there
For the four-fold processional of seasons,
The blue, mysterious air.

And always woman's heart, in anguish burning
When some dear dream is lost,
Has questioned of those hollow heavens, turning
At such uncounted cost.
Always the young child's rapture and youth's dreaming
Illumine the world with hope,
Then slowly vision fades, until its gleaming
Returns up the last slope.

Always the intimation of a presence
Beyond the earthly sense,
Forever there, forever life's true essence
Until new life commence.
For, always, earth would need not ask for Heaven
If only Love kept true, life's light and leaven. . . .

"Individuality," which Mrs. Conant writes for some young friend of hers, is striking:

Never lose hold of what particular thing
—Germ in the seed of your especial flower—
Was given you; your dream, your urge to sing,
The pattern of your loom an earthly hour. . . .
Lose not the essence of your singing self,
Nor be a changeling, alien from the cradle;
Wrap not your talent, hide it on no shelf,
Nor be, since it is not some other, idle. . . .

Let not some rare, invisible design
Go incomplete for lack of your thread's treasure,
Though other colour seems to you more fine
Than yours, more exquisitely jade or azure,
For time should see the beauty of the blend
Bloom into your own nature, in the end. . . .

Anna R. Maskel, whose *From Fallow* is published by Bruce Humphries, Inc., writes us that she is " deeply influenced by the ancient masters of the East. Their poetry, naked of adornment, has survived by the clean strength of its own vitality. That is how I would like to be able to write ! Imbedded in the confusing matrix of human events are some of the eternal truths about men, truths older than Confucius, but still contemporary, which the mind must chisel out, and turn in many lights before it can find what hidden, subtle powers link these truths with the distant past and with our present."

The graphic brevity of the East is to be found in a number of Miss Maskel's lyrics. " Time and the Wind " follows :

Weep not.
Once I was
Stronger than pain,
Like leaf
That roots again !

Weep not,
But when I have left
Remember me
In the far-flung fruit
Of a naked tree !

A lengthy poem entitled " Hospital Thoughts " will find an answer in the minds of all who have had to endure time in a hospital. In this poem Miss Maskel pictures the elder doctor and the young interne with dramatic exactitude. In this day, when the reading world is absorbed in such books as Dr. Cronin's recent volumes concerning doctors and hospitals, this poem is particularly timely. Belonging to the genre of the East is the following " Woman And Man " :

I.

Wisdom.

I have swept my hearth,
And have trimmed my lamps,
And my thoughts are lit with joy.
But I sit and wonder
Which fire you will see first.

II.

The Question.

Sometimes I am the ore
And you are the hammer,
Or I am the hammer
And you are the ore.
But what is the forge ?

A third book from Margaret E. Bruner is *In Thoughtful Mood* (The Kaleidograph Press, Dallas, Texas). Mrs. Bruner has recently had the honour to win a peace event with her essay entitled " A Plea for Peace," the Indiana branch of the League of American Pen Women sponsoring the contest. Mrs. Bruner sends us an excellent expression on poetry, which we are glad to include in this review :

> " It is well that we have due respect and that we read and become familiar with the work of the old poets, but it seems to me that the poets of to-day are making their work more vital and more human than many of the poets of the past. To-day the poetry is more of actual experience, as the great majority of men and women who are writing it must needs earn their bread and butter in other lines of work—only a few live by the sale of poetry. This puts them more in touch with the world in general, and they do not need to draw so much upon the Greek and

Roman legends, as many of the older poets did. It may be just a peculiar opinion of my own, but I think the poem that has really been lived by its author will almost always strike a responsive chord in the largest number of readers. It is for the poet to make the great mass of the people articulate; the world is very much akin, and all, no matter how different their stations in life may be, have similar experiences.

"I think the poets of the west, southwest and central states of the United States of America are expressing their views and impressions of life, for the most part, in a clear, straightforward manner. We do not know whose poetry will stand the test of time, but I do think the poet who is sincere—who puts his ideas into simple, concise language that the man in the street understands, will stand as good a chance of belonging to the ages as the poet who adheres to the unusual word and veils his thought in far-fetched phrases."

In *In Thoughtful Mood* we find some hundred poems—lyrics and sonnets—expressive of a ready imagination and an animated sense of the value of words. Very timely, when the world is depending on alms and doles, is the following sonnet "If Lincoln Should Return":

If Lincoln were to come again to earth,
And view this land of plenty and yet know
That countless of its people knew but dearth,
And in their hearts was bitterness and woe,
Those sorrowing eyes of his perhaps would wear
An even more profound and troubled gaze,
And though he faltered he would not despair,
But find new lamps to light the darkened ways.

For only he who once walked hand in hand
With poverty, can feel for those whose lot
It is to wear the stigma of the brand
Of alms and doles that leaves an ugly blot—
The heart that bled for every one who knew
Distress, would somehow know the thing to do.

Sensitive and striking is the following short lyric, "Age":

To-day while sweeping
Fallen leaves from the side-walk
Two young lovers passed;
The leaves rattled mockingly—
Suddenly I felt quite old.

Robert P. Tristram Coffin, whose *Strange Holiness* won the Pulitzer Prize in 1936, covers the wide field of literature in his writing—essayist, biographer, novelist and poet. In this seventh volume *Saltwater Farm* (Macmillan) are poems steeped in the reserve and quiet beauty

of the New England life and landscape. The first poem " This Is My Country," is a touching testimonial to Coffin's devotion to this land of " granite on the world's bright edge "—an unforgettable picture: " wind wrapped round each last and living thing ". . . .

" A lighthouse like a diamond, cut and sharp,
And all the trees like strings upon a harp.

These are my people, saving of emotion,
With their eyes dipped in the Winter ocean,
The lonely, patient ones, whose speech comes slow,
Whose bodies always lean towards the blow,
The enduring and the clean, the tough and clear,
Who live where Winter is the word for year
And the briar rose had best be brief,
Where most trees wear a dagger for a leaf.
These people are my kindred and my kind,
They have a sort of lighthouse for a mind,
Keeping lit inside, because the sun
Is too low to be a trusted one,
The cheerful, crystal people who have had
The chance to know the taste of being sad."

A review of *Strange Holiness*, Pultizer Prize Winner, appeared in the November-December 1936, number of the REVIEW. At that time Mr. Coffin contributed several paragraphs on poetry, quoting :

" It seems to me that poetry might be defined as saying the best one can about life."

And continuing :

" The poet is aided by a beautiful angel . . . the name of that angel is memory . . . A poet could be called a man who has made friends with his memory."

A first book of poetry from May Sarton, *Encounter in April* (Houghton, Mifflin Co.), calls from the reader immediate and appreciative enjoyment. Gifted with the temperament of the artist, and possessing a sensitive and romantic vocabulary, the volume glows with the evidence that here is a poet. Several sonnet sequences are included in this volume, together with graphic lyrics in *vers libre*. Emotion and perfection of form are to be found in this collection. The first sonnet from *Encounter in April* follows :

We came together softly like two deers
Their horns in velvet still, erect and slight,
Their fur like silk, their large eyes amber-clear,
Startled and dazzled in each other's light.
We stood quite still together face to face,
Untrembling, unaware, remote from love,

Beguiled there simply by each other's grace,
Not moving—O we did not want to move.
We stood quite still like two deer in a wood
Knowing a silence exquisite and wild,
Chilled into crystal the mercurial blood,
The heart fierce and transparent as a child:
We came together softly in great wonder
Not dreaming of this lightning-love, this thunder.

In a letter just received, Miss Sarton writes us:

"I am afraid I write poetry for the same reason that the Bellman in the 'Hunting of the Snark' excitedly tingled his bell . . . and that is a 'beaverish-reason' under which I must hide my shyness when speaking out loud about a subject with which I have been passionately in love ever since I can remember. One writes because one must, and only when one must, but the reason for that 'must' is quite beyond me."

We give the last sonnet from this talented collection:

Now let me rest. Now let me lay my hand
Upon yours, as cool, as smooth as stone.
Keep it. Hold it as holds the clear-ribbed sand
A wave's shape after the wave has gone.
Let no wind come to blow the lashes down
Between our eyes that look each into each
As a faun looks at that sea-changed faun
Reflected in a pool. Let the bronze beach
Colour our mind alone with sand and space.
All that we gave, or lost, or took in pain
Forgotten as wind is in this windless place,
Forgotten as noise of wind driving the rain.
Now let us rest. Now let me lay my hand
In yours—like a smooth stone on the smooth sand.

Author of *Moon Shadows* and *Winter Bird Song*, Mrs. Sherwood in her third book, *Water Meadow* (The Wings Press), further establishes the claim of her reviewer that her work is melodious, serene, contemplative and includes excellent sonnets and sympathetic lyrics. *The Forum* comments on this book in the following lines: "Radiant nature verse of deep emotion controlled in tranquillity."

Mrs. Sherwood writes us of poetry that "it is the language of beauty, the vehicle for inspiration, and the means whereby the commonplace may be enlightened and even made to put on a quite unimagined loveliness. . . . That great master of description, Charles Dickens, never used mean words to express the disagreeable and yet, does he not as a realist, far transcend most of the so-called realists of the present day? Did he not always find inevitable words for what he wanted to show and always without being offensive? It seems to me

that poetry never should be dated. . . . After all, the great emotions and aspirations of humanity are unchangeable from age to age and should not be smothered in the dress of one particular era."

The poignant sorrow of one doomed to know the longing of separation from home scenes is graphically given in " Exile " :

Never again to see this kind of green
Nor ever more to breathe this special air.
No more, as part of this familiar scene,
To press these stones of home ; hardly to dare
To think of these old towers or of this stream.
To know a longing not to be suppressed
For faces living only in a dream.
To wonder, distant, if someone has guessed
The secret malady that has your heart.
To learn that rest is never yours to find,
To know yourself pursued and set apart.
Musing on home, to other vision blind,
And with your soul implanted in a land
No longer yours to know or understand.

What poet has not at some time held the thought set forth in the following lyric :

Here are the lines I wish had been my own ;
Stating with frugal beauty what I've thought,
Watching the trees in winter or, alone,
Seeking the words for what the day has brought.

Here the essential loveliness of ice
Is set in flowers, sparkling on chill trees ;
Suggested here, in sparseness most concise,
Appear the elusive moment's mysteries.

In *Rowen* (Houghton Mifflin and Co.), Harold Trowbridge Pulsifer writes with a fine appreciation of values in life's experience and a scholarly appreciation of words, together with a poet's understanding. Pulsifer has enjoyed many literary honours and is winner of a number of distinguished prizes.

From the many memorable sonnets we have chosen " A Prayer " :

Dear God, I do not ask for happiness
In this strange world of yours, nor yet to know
Why children die, nor yet why love's caress
Holds but a frustrate beauty, dark with woe.
I do not seek to know my ordered place
In a vast cosmos, where stars float like dust,
Or why the mystery that veils your face
Gives forth no word—but the command to trust.
I ask no more than strength to fill each hour

With eager hunger of a burning mind,
Body and soul to share in that rich dower—
The common heritage of human kind.
Dear God, if you have any boon to give,
Grant me, through my brief days, deep power to live !

For those who are striving to find expression in poetry, the following sonnet, " Minor Poet ", will be thoroughly appreciated :

Oh for an hour of glory, for one dream
Made manifest in beauty, one desire
Perfected in fulfillment, for one gleam
Within my speech of the authentic fire !
How Hamlet's bitter phrase, his " Words, words, words,"
Etched deep within the tissue of my brain
Mocks my pursuit—as swiftly flying birds
Mock a child's hands clutching the air in vain.
How shall I make a pattern of these sounds—
These winging words that never stoop to light,
These silver syllables whose music bounds
All wisdom and all wonder and all sight :
How shall I shape a pattern that will hold
All life like attar in a cup of gold ?

Mr. Pulsifer sends us several interesting paragraphs on poetry :

" The more I read poetry the more certain I am that it should contain a large emotional content. Lyric poetry is almost pure emotion. It becomes important poetry when the emotions expressed are universal in character and voiced in a way individual and distinctive.

" The lyric poet may express emotions which are wholly personal, but he should aim to express these emotions so that the reader will say : ' I, too, have felt that. I have known that grief or that joy.'

" Harriet Monroe once reviewed a book of mine and in that review was a phrase which I quote from memory : ' Mr. Pulsifer has discovered no new agonies and no new ecstasies.' What she probably meant was that I had not expressed the old agonies and the old ecstasies in a way which appealed to her. There are no new agonies and there are no new ecstasies. There are only new people to experience afresh the ancient tragedies and the eternal emotions."

Let us briefly review the years travelled by Robert Hillyer since his birth in 1895, in East Orange, New Jersey, interrupted by his service with Expeditionary Forces from 1917 to 1919, first as ambulance driver, than as First Lieutenant in the A.E.F., then as courier for the Peace Conference. On his return, Hillyer taught at Trinity College and in 1928 returned to Harvard to become Professor in the English

Department. Robert Hillyer is the author of some dozen volumes of poetry and one novel, and in 1934 was honoured with the Pulitzer Prize for the best collection of that year.

In a recent letter from Mr. Hillyer, he writes of his new book, *A Letter to Robert Frost and Others* (Alfred A. Knopf, New York): "There is no doubt in my mind that it is the best work I have done." The employing of the letter form in poetry, carrying with it a certain personal note, is intriguing. These letters are addressed to Robert Frost, Bernard De Voto, Charles Townsend Copeland, James B. Munn, Peyton Randolph Campbell, the Egyptian Queen Nefertiti, and the author's son.

Mr. Hillyer speaks of his friendship with Robert Frost in the following:

> Ours is a startling friendship, because art,
> Mother of quarrels who tears friends apart,
> Has bound us ever closer, mind and heart.

In discoursing on the poets of the day, the following is interesting:

> The sly recluse of Amherst in those times
> Moved me, in spite of questionable rhymes.
> We talked of women poets, nothing else,
> From Sappho to our friend at Sevenels.
> "Miss Dickinson is best!" You shook your head.
> "Perhaps a genius, but mad," you said.
> Alas for Emily, alas for me,
> That now I go much further than agree:
> Once irresistible, now merely coy,
> Her whims, her verbal airs and graces cloy.
>
> Taste changes. Candid Louis Untermeyer
> Consigns his past editions to the fire;
> His new anthology, refined and thrifty,
> Builds up some poets and dismisses fifty.
> And every poet spared, as is but human,
> Remarks upon his critical acumen.

And further, Hillyer's appreciation of Robert Bridges:

> Take Robert Bridges, laureate forever,
> Calm as the sea and flowing as a river,
> Who knew his source and end, but also knew
> The homely country he meandered through;
> Who, when we thought his broadening current spent,
> Flung high that sun-capped wave, his testament,
> The *Testament of Beauty*.

These lines bristle with critical and provocative comments. From his letter to Peyton Randolph Campbell, who was killed in action, we

have chosen the following striking query:

How shall we reach the dead? Are they reborn,
Bewildered mortals in a second morn?
Reincarnations whom the years discover
Unweaving and reweaving their lives over?
Disarmed of all experience, to make
The same small triumph and the same mistake,
Repeated through the ages till they press
On to Nirvana, crowned with Nothingness?
Better a phantom universe than none—
Anything, anything, but oblivion.
Let others put two mirrors face to face
To see themselves reflected beyond space;
In space and time where I dwell at present,
I use one glass and find it not unpleasant;
Except that time, fast greying on my brow,
Bids me enlist in the Eternal Now.

Hillyer's letter to his son any father would do well to read. Quoting from it:

With inverted roles,
Motors have made mere playthings of men's souls.
Not war, not plague, not any ill you mention
Has crushed mankind like this obscene invention;
All life resolves, in leisure or in toil,
To the production or misuse of oil.
Man's body flung full speed straight up the hill
Mounts with a nervous lift; his mind is nil.
Free in the air he skims, the while his spirit
Dives down to every ill that brutes inherit.
Let others praise inventiveness; I know
That where wings go there also bombs can go.
In short, dear son, my aging nervous centres
Quiver with indignation at inventors;
But you, no doubt, will find it commonplace
To speed through time and hurtle into space:
Two elements that bend to Berkeley's dream
By being something less than what they seem.
But though speedometers burn up with speed,
And clocks whirl madly at a moment's need,
Eternity awaits. That does not heed.

Percy Hutchinson has said of Hillyer:

> Through all these topsy-turvy years, Hillyer kept his head. Poetry was to him a sacred thing: it had traditions, tested through centuries, not to be ignored. . . . Robert Hillyer has poetic vision, and is a craftsman in the art of poetry as well."

Allen Tate whose new volume of *Selected Poems* was reviewed in our last issue, sends the following personal comments :

> " I have always been afraid to examine too closely my reasons for writing ; if I found them out I might quit. There's no reason why I shouldn't quit except that I've been doing it for fifteen years, and probably couldn't do anything else. All the occupations that are not followed chiefly for profit are mysterious, and cabinet-making no less than poetry. But I don't feel that people deserve any unusual credit for following them : the praise or blame should refer to the quality of the thing produced. I've never been able to see myself as an ' intellectual ' poet. I am chiefly concerned with the irrational and menacing energy that lies below consciousness, as it clashes with our formal codes and rituals."

Mrs. Marion Canby's second book *On My Way* (Houghton, Mifflin, Co., Boston, Mass.) gives us poems filled with the dramatic experience of life and the insistent query concerning its meaning. The last twenty pages are engaged by a serious long poem, entitled " Poem in Vindication of Life," and places Marion Canby in the forefront of American poets, speculative and philosophic, who concern themselves with the contemplation of our world and its present maladies. As the doctor studies his ill patient, so Marion Canby studies and analyses our world and its maladies and gives her version of " what's wrong," to use her own phrase. The poem opens with :

> It is high time that someone should speak up for the world,
> For its reputation is in violent danger
> And few are loyal to the cause of life—
> Even the artists have turned inward on themselves !
> . . . . .
> Saying no word to deny life's cruelty,
> But staunchly asserting its vital dignity.

The Epilogue closes with :

> *Let tyrants try to rule a happy world !*
> Now come, philosophy, come, common sense,
> Come health, come joy, to rescue this poor world !
> Teach science soon to think of happiness. . .

Many keen, well-conceived and fine lines are to be found through this study of life. From the Prologue :

> The world's sore sickness *cannot* be an ill
> Induced by lack of opportunity !
> Whatever is it, then, that brings a race
> Born to a world uniquely all its own
> Within a universe ablaze with glory
> Low now on sterile dust of disbelief ?
> . . . . .

Our parents lived in splendid certainty,
Such a short time ago!

It would seem that man, in his mind's abrupt rebound from nothingness finding science, has been overwhelmed by this very discovery for the moment.

. . . And here at last we find
Strict diagnosis of our malady,
Which is, in short, that man is heaven-starved!
Earth cannot satisfy, when all is said,
Spirits possessed of vision by good right
Of unremembered eons spent within
The impervious round of majesty, revealed
At last by conscious clarity of seeing—
Men are born thirsting for infinity!
(Still dazed by their own miracle of sight,
They have not yet looked squarely at the sky.)
And if they heed the narrowed earth alone,
Their spirits sink in illness through their flesh!

In "What Should I Say," Mrs. Canby's tribute to her mother is beautiful:

I have written many poems to my mother,
These years of her silence, of her not being there.
For it was too strange not to hear her quick answer
In all that concerned me; I pushed back the silence
With poems to prove that I held her true dearness
Cleared of the fret of despondent decades,
That I held her serenity in spite of brows furrowed
By sorrowful endings of many kind hopes.

. . . . .

She shines in my mind with a radiant stillness!
I do not need rainbows, possessing her poised beam,
Bright till I pull down the shades of my life.

A perfect picture we find in "Connecticut Idyll":

Did you notice that house at the corner,
Ample behind its small panes,
Fresh and rested, after the night?
A guernsey cropped under the apple tree,
While morning undulated up the sweet, white wall,
Lifting the elm-leaf shadows;
And a girl in pink gingham stood under the fanlight,
Watching the world go by.

There are several fine sonnets in this collection. As an example we give "Anxious Border":

If you can tell me how to live with all
My heart and yet to keep my spirit free,
You will confer an incalculable good on me!
For I am riding to a foregone fall—
Riding with many another within call
Who also seeks his life's entirety;
It seems we all are spurring mightily
Only to come against a mountain-wall
Implacable as death. If only I could find
One way that did not go completely blind! . . .
Of course, it's probable, when all is said,
That life's whole company cannot be dead:
Some have come forth into a place of order,
Set back in safety from that anxious border!

Marion Canby sends us the following paragraph on poetry written for THE POETRY REVIEW:

> "It seems to me that many admirers of poetry wrong its true and vital nature by a too worshipful attitude. I cannot believe that poetry is located in a paradise fenced off from the prose-pasture—there are too many flowers among the every day words for that supposition! Poetry first emerges, indeed, from the very midst of that nature prose called speech as an emotional heightening of verbal expression under stress, and this heightening continually flashes through all prose, spoken or written. It only becomes poetry specifically when the impulses which cannot contain themselves in ordinary vehicles of expression develop and organize a super-medium. This new poetic medium with all the resources of technique, suggestion and incantation at its command, is effective not only for the momentary flash but for the expression of all that *cannot* be told by the less richly endowed prose-medium. But still poetry is blood-brother of prose, serviceable like it for real need; though rich and rare it is not supernatural, not to be set aside and worshipped. If poetry is not as necessary as prose—*more* necessary because of the vital and intimate natures of its urgencies—it should be dispensed with. Too much of it is written for worshipful admirers by self-worshipping authors."

ALICE HUNT BARTLETT.

Apropos the Fleming sonnet experiment, Marguerite Johansen writes of "Annunciation" printed in this issue: I have used the sonnet-form, but if you have strict views on the subject you may very likely hesitate to call it a sonnet. The rhyme-pattern (one of which I am rather fond) is my own and without precedent—and no lawyer ever argued more on precedent than many sonnet-enthusiasts—and I have extended the last line by a foot for emphasis, a device which this particular rhyme-pattern seems to invite.

A BLENDING OF DIVERSITY

POETRY, we know, does not pay. Few read it, fewer buy it and fewest of all will risk publishing it. One can only be amazed at the extraordinary resilience of those, who in face of all this, still continue to write it in quantities by no means negligible; and even—to judge from the avalanche of new books of verse which pours monthly into these offices—still succeed in cajoling otherwise hard-headed business men to publish them. Poets may be dead; but they won't lie down.

Here are six chosen out of about three dozen, as forming a group not without interest, dissimilar in taste, yet making together a blend of flavours enhanced by the mixture:

The Lute Player in Avalon, Sir Campbell Mitchell-Cotts (F. Muller, Ltd., 5s.).

The Fifth Element, J. Griffyth Fairfax (John Murray, 3s. 6d.).

Peace Without Honour, Winifred Holmes (G. Duckworth and Co., Ltd., 3s. 6d.).

No Return, K. V. Chevis, (F. Muller, Ltd., 5s.).

The Unveiling, W. S. Handley Jones (The Epworth Press, 2s. 6d.).

Mrs. Kimber, Osbert Sitwell, (Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 8s. 6d.).

Sir Campbell Mitchell-Cotts believes in tickling the ears of the groundlings. There are passages in this latest book calculated to shock all but the most highly seasoned. There are also passages of quiet and authentic poetry; as "Candlelight:"

> The light from the candle
> Falls on your face.
> How small a light reveals
> How great a sadness!

Where the author, who can write like this, fails to do so, his failure seems due to that mistaken zeal for originality of phrase (and if possible of idea) which is the primary curse of the modern school of verse-writing. Originality is always interesting and frequently charming. But I am going to throw a bomb into the ranks of Tusculum right away with the suggestion that a good derivative poem is better than a bad original one.

I find this author's versification interesting: I think like most of his contemporaries, he fails completely with the short broken line (the appalling difficulties of this form do not seem to be generally realized); but when he steps into the long "swung" line, which Whitman handled so well, his music becomes amazingly successful, as in "The Yesterday" and "Stripped Bark." The last and the most ambitious poem in the book, "Thunder of God" has something of the speed and energy of the "Hound of Heaven" but will not compare with that poem in brilliance of symphonic colouring. It is, however, a sincere and memorable piece of work, arresting, closely allied to the poetry of the metaphysical school.

When I descended in a circle of light
To my small golgotha of flesh and bone
I travelled not alone,
But brought with me my God.
All through the night
We travelled, no one spoke to one,
Nor could speak :
Such speech is uttered deep within,
Too deep for man-made uttering.

This is certainly the deepest thing in the book, and was rightly made to close it—a good augury of the author's future work, which we will hope to find less startling and even more precise.

With *The Fifth Element* by J. Griffyth Fairfax we are on safer and more traditional ground. Yet it is the reading of a book like this that makes one realize why tradition in poetry has fallen into disrepute. I read page after page of these charming verses, adorned as they are with the fatal gift of felicity, and retain at the end—nothing.

This work is no more satisfying than a Barmecide feast. Yet it is difficult to find actual flaws in it : the verse is smooth and competent, the images are all quite correct, joy and sorrow, horror and despair are all expressed in the proper places—but there does not seem any genuine reason why it should be written or published. Perhaps that would apply to most poetry, for inevitable poems are rare ; but I do think this writer's facility a real danger to him. One poem alone stood out for me, " Questions."

What song the Sirens sang
  Poets have wondered,
While against black rocks rang
  White waves that thundered.
I ask a simple thing—
What song the crickets sing
  Beneath my window nightly,
  So gaily, so lightly.

What air did Orpheus play,
  Scholars ask sadly,
That made the wild-wood fey
  To follow him madly.
I long to know what words
Birds sing to other birds,
  And, had I further wishes,
  What fishes say to fishes.

Peace without Honour by Winifred Holmes is in a category about halfway between the two books just discussed, and is in my opinion far the best item in this group. From this one alone did I draw here and there the unmistakable deep thrill that one draws only from the best in

poetry. May I counsel the writer for a time at least to abandon free verse, which she does not understand, and to concentrate on formal rhythms, which she does? It is most interesting to see how this is shown in the three choruses which open the book. The Prologue in chopped, irregular lines jerks and grinds all over its lovely images; chorus II though still irregular, uses a longer line, and achieves with the aid of rhyme and the resources of sprung rhythm, a real and satisfying sound climax. The Epilogue in fully rhymed tetrameters exhibits once again the natural connection between regularity of form and beauty of sound. I wish I had space to quote the whole Epilogue, but here are the first twelve lines.

> The day steals on; before too late
> We'll climb a mountain's frosted pate,
> Pausing a moment on his nose
> To observe how smooth the river flows.
> Come creeping up her silken side
> Three ships from England winged wide,
> Bearing to township, homestead, post,
> Good news or bad, green settlers most.
> See where but bushmen once did stand
> Naked with boomerangs in their hand
> A village nestles snug and tight
> Enlaced by orchards of apples bright.

There are so many things in this book we would like to quote—"The Cock,"

> His two legs stiff, his claws dug in,
> Who stretches taller, taller still,
> Whose feathers strain to quit his skin,

—the sublimated observation which makes poetry in image—

> The rain,
> . . . beat, beating, beating on the earth.
> Stamping and treading with relentless tiny, feet.

—how close the sound to the sense, and both to truth! "In Evensong,"

> When all the lovely painted plates of day
> Between the covers of the night are shut,

—Boldness and originality which do not pass over the boundary into the uncouth.

One could, I suppose, in this book select as many examples of failure; but I prefer the real beauties which are here, and gladly commend this volume to every poetry lover.

In *No Return* Miss Chevis has produced a first book of poems which is not devoid of promise, but which in performance rarely reaches a very high level. One seems to have read most of it before in slightly different words, and its passion, though sincere, does not strike into the

heart. She understands the sonnet form, but perfect form alone will not make a sonnet, though it is perhaps more than half the battle.

A fair specimen of her craft is " Christmas 1933" :

> Had there been snow
> We could have listened to those silences
> Pure whiteness holds ;
> We could have sent our dreams
> Whispering along that stillness in our minds
> Down the far chiming of the centuries,
> Gifts to nativity.
>
> Christmas has come !
> But Christ is crucified.
> The snow falls tardily, and where it lies
> Car wheels have darkened it.

A clear, delicate engraving, but too tenuous to hold the mind.

Still another first book, *The Unveiling* by W. S. Handley Jones. There is always an expectation and a delight in one's first approach to a first book of verse. Will the author scale the Piplean mount ? Or will the Muses with pitchforks heave him headlong down ? The Muses must have had a lot of vigorous exercise lately. I would not attempt to prophesy how they will treat Mr. Jones. His technique is perfect, he has a real command of imagery, just use of phrase, just control of emotion. He can write lovely lines—

> Soft clouds that wander swirling, wild and white,
> And piloted in freedom through the sky.

He can paint lovely pictures.

> What though at nightfall like a glimmering ghost
> Steals Winter, with his ploughshare, of thin frost.

He can conceive the startling image which marks out Poetry, as in the beautiful sonnet, " Show me thy Hands."

> Rough peasant hands, not less divinely great
> In labour at the bench than on the Cross—
> Show me Thy hands, world-conquering Artisan.

Mr. Jones is a long way from the summit of Helicon at present. Bu I feel that the Muses should and will let him climb.

Mrs. Kimber by Osbert Sitwell is illustrated with eight drawings by Mary Kessel. What remarkable drawings ! a fluidity of line, well-matched to their briny subject. For the poem is about fish ; and seems intended by its author to test how far a well-known name will be permitted to go in carelessness of design, in roughness of treatment, in lack of reason equally with rhyme, in lack of interest, of grip, of intensity—in short of poetry, before someone says, " Stop ! "

T. Weston Ramsey.

ANCIENT AND MODERN LOVE:

The Reformation of a "Modern" Poet

Mr. Richard Aldington's literary renown rests mainly upon his novels, but he has also written more than one book of poems. Hitherto his poetry has been of the *genus* "Epileptic Nonsense," with (according to a friend) the Luxemburg exception. At least, that is how I would classify the only volume which I had read till the other day. Mr. John Sparrow in his scholarly and scathing *Sense and Poetry* assigns him to the *species* "Imagists," and, giving an example of Mr. Aldington's work, dryly remarks that it is practically indistinguishable from that of scores of similar minor poets.

And now a miracle has happened. Mr. Aldington has produced a book (*The Crystal World*: Heinemann, 5s.) of graceful and musical love-poems. Only very rarely does the Old Adam return. He fell in love with a damsel, young and beautiful, and the poems indicate the course of his wooing.

"There shall be no reproach from me,
No word of bitterness or scorn;
To live along with so much grief
Breaks every passion save regret.

O passionate regret for hours
That shone like mountains tipped with fire,
That seemed to be the dawn and were
But embers of a dying sun.

O passionate regret! Can Time
That crushes us with heavy hours,
Abate no moment of this pain
Nor quench that yearning of the flesh?"

The publishers promise us "time after time, some lovely line, some happy image." And these we find, though I must confess that Mr. Aldington, as Browning says, "Re-issues words and phrases from the old mint," and that the "images and superscriptions" borne by this mintage are time-honoured. But, after all, if you think that, for instance, a girl looks like a flower, what is the harm in saying so, as Mr. Aldington several times does? Heaven knows what Mr. Aldington might have likened her to before his reformation. We know what these "Imagists" and "Surrealists" have done.

I have often noticed that a sense of humour is not always among the gifts bestowed by Heaven on "modern" poets. And so, I fear that the couplet

"To die for you were too small a gift;
I shall live for you"

may provoke a cynical smile, for it is not very complimentary to the young lady. Still, the book can be read with pleasure.

The Recreations of a Novelist

Another celebrated novelist, Mr. H. de Vere Stacpoole, has also published a delightful volume of verse (*In a Bonchurch Garden*; Hutchinson, 5s.), original and translated. Here is one of his own charming poems: "Tanagra Figurine"

"Warm from the arms of some bright lad,
With foot unspoiled by shoe that pinches,
Lovely enough to drive one mad,
In height, from sole to crown, eight inches;
Dug from the soil that once was Greece
You stand upon my mantel piece.

Teller of tales of myrtle groves,
What time the Cyprian ruled your nation,
You never paused to count your loves
Did you, nor voiced that lamentation
'Half the long weary night has gone,
Time passes, yet I lie alone.'

Who knows, but maybe that is why
Some men admire and some mistrust you,
And maiden aunts with frozen eye
Express the grim desire to dust you,
Unconscious that their words have wit,
Calling you never 'She' but 'It.'"

Most of the book consists of translation from Villon and Sappho. Mr. Stacpoole is one of the many who live under the spell which Sappho cast upon the ancient world. And yet, by the greatest of literary tragedies, we possess of her works only two short poems, the invocation to Aphrodite and the poem to a Lesbian girl, together with rather over a hundred fragments, mostly of only a line or two. Wharton in his edition of the poetess, obviously a labour of love, gives several of the many versions which have been made of the two poems, including Catullus's "Ille mi par esse deis videtur."

I think that Mr. Stacpoole's renderings are as near to the original and as graceful as any. I have styled this notice "the recreations of a novelist." His translations might almost be called "re-creations."

A Romance of the Ancient Days

The Marriage of Peleus and Thetis, by Amy Key Clarke (Heffer, 2s. 6d.), is a deft telling in graceful verse of the wooing and rescue from her Ocean-captivity of the goddess Thetis by the mortal Peleus. The author has chosen a seven-line stanza, each ending with an Alexandrine, and the effect is dignified. Here is Peleus's vision of the Centaurs:

He saw a thousand shapes, a thousand breaths
Misting the speckless night with solid air.
A thousand horsed and human-headed Deaths

Rode down on him. Men to their breasts they were,
But horses underneath; their brows were wise,
And from their lofty heads and sparkling eyes
All human passions shone,—if pity had been there!

Messrs. Heffer are to be congratulated on producing this very readable poem in such neat form at so low a price. And as the proceeds are to go to the Newnham College Building Fund, those who are both lovers of poetry and supporters of the University education of women can add to a famous Foundation a brick or two, without dropping any.

A Poet of Politics

Mr. Harrold Johnson's *World Lyrics* (Blackwell, 2s. 6d.) seem to me to attain a higher level than did his *Empire Lyrics*. He attempts to justify, and successfully, his styling a volume which consists mainly of sonnets as lyrics. Several of the poems have appeared in the *Daily News*, *Morning Post* and *Punch*. Most of these are political sonnets, like those of William Watson, by whom Mr. Johnson seems to have been more than a little influenced. Here is his tribute to Watson's memory:

You were not of our manners or our days,
Of Milton's and of Wordsworth's lineage sprung,
Accounted once our loftiest bards among,
Though now to other gods men altars raise.
You never swerved aside for the world's praise,
For though of England worthily you sung,
You lashed her with the valour of your tongue
When she forsook her old heroic ways.

'Twas not your shame but ours that laid you low,
Lord of the jewelled line, the sceptred word,
The singer who alone had power to show
What richest in the veins of England stirred:
A bard-in-waiting filched your honour due,
And then, *parbleu*, we dubbed you Knight of Rue.

For the information of younger readers, it may be mentioned that the "bard-in-waiting" was a capable Tory journalist, but very minor poet, whom a cynical Tory Prime Minister elevated to the vacant chair of Tennyson.

A Fluent Poet

Publishers of poetry usually tell us on the wrapper something about the poet. They are also apt to commit themselves to eulogies of the poems, eulogies which the reader does not always echo. Messrs. Watts, more addicted to works of severe rationalism than to poetry, austerely present *Poems of The Past and Present* (5s.) by Charles Stratford Catty without a hint. As a matter of fact Mr. Catty is an old contributor to The Poetry Review. It is a sturdy volume of fifty poems

filling 266 pages. So Mr. Catty is a fluent rather than an epigrammatic poet. Even when he writes anything so brief as a sonnet, he makes it one of a string of sonnets. Ballads, narratives, dramatic fragments, poems of Nature, love-poems are here. In reading I was occasionally reminded now of Browning, now of Tennyson, but only occasionally. Mr. Catty is a competent poet who has several things to say that are worth saying, and he so says them as to please the ear. Now and again one meets a fanciful turn of phrase that marks him as a poet. Thus—

> They passed by me at my lord's gate;
> She smiled where she sat light and straight,
> *With a word framed in her smile.*

Not a bad volume, except for its bulk, to take away for a week-end.

An Epic Born out of Due Season

Mr. Irving Taylor has presented to the Society a copy of his epic *Azal and Edras*, incidentally a handsome volume, with illustrations, (one in colour) by Frank Brangwyn, R.A. The poem is an allegory in the Miltonic manner, on the Great War. It seems to me a remarkable feat of fancy and craftsmanship sustained, so far as I can judge from sundry random samplings, at a consistently high level throughout a poem of over 5,000 lines. His friend, that wayward genius the late T. W. H. Crosland, in a preface admires Mr. Irving Taylor's courage in undertaking an epic in these unleisured days, and affirms confidently that if the author had chosen a smoother and easier pathway of poetry it would have led him to celebrity. Mr. Crosland concludes by quoting ten separate lines of blank verse and telling us that four are by Milton and six by Mr. Irving Taylor, challenges readers to allocate them to their respective authors. It is a terrible test, and the way in which the younger poet stands up to it shows that he too, in the words which the older poet borrowed from Virgil, knows how "to build the lofty line." The book is, of course, available to members in the Library.

Edward Vandermere Fleming.

THE FRIENDS OF KEATS

There could hardly have been a better biographer of John Taylor than Mr. Edmund Blunden. His *Keats' Publisher* (Cape, 8s. 6d.) not only gives a detailed portrait of Taylor himself, but it also paints in a group of his contemporaries with whom Mr. Blunden is already on intimate terms.

It is consoling to know more about the good friends of Keats, who recognized his genius, loved him for his own sake, and valiantly fought his detractors. John Taylor published "Endymion" and "Lamia" in expensive volumes at his own risk (and incidental loss) while the poet was alive, because he was convinced of their great merit. He was responsible for collecting and loaning the money for Keats'

vain journey to Italy, and had it not been for the sad misunderstandings and jealousies of Keats' friends would have written the poet's life soon after he died, with every vindication of his genius.

Yes, it is good to be reminded of the encouragement Keats received from Taylor and his firm (Taylor and Hessey), to know that he was not reviled in more than one or two quarters, and that his poignant epitaph was not wrung from him so much by the persecutions of his fellow men as by the horrible depression of his illness. According to letters quoted, his original phrase ended with " whose name was writ *on* water," not " *in* water " as the tombstone reads. It would be very interesting if Mr. Blunden could tell us how the discrepancy arose.

John Taylor's other notable protégé was John Clare, whose works he printed and pushed with all his care, struggling with Clare's lapse from inspiration, execrable handwriting, and final tragedy.

The history of the short-lived *London Magazine* of which Taylor was founder and part editor, is a drama in itself, and we are shown the harassed editor in his relations with his illustrious contributors : Lamb, Coleridge, de Quincey, Cunningham, Hazlitt, Landor, etc., endeavouring to keep his periodical filled with the finest pieces of literature yet free of those moral and political opinions which would offend its readers, and alienating the writers by his cutting and censorship.

Taylor was a man of strong scruples and refused to publish any of Byron's poems. His father commended him : " I am very thankful that you and Mr. Hessey have had the resolution to refuse publishing Lord Byron's work. . . . I never sell his works without a bit of a twinge." The prejudice has not remained in the family, however, for at the present day a relation by marriage of Taylor, the Rev. D. R. Fotheringham, is the enthusiastic Secretary of the Byron Society.

Mr. Blunden explains how in later years Taylor took to publishing scientific and educational books (his own bibliography is no small one) and prospered by them. His work as the practical recognizer of great poetry and his sound powers of discrimination have not gone unrewarded in the estimate of later generations.

Hard on the heels of this book (I am trying to bridge the discrepancy of a review a year late) comes a new volume of poems from Mr. Blunden himself, named from its opening lines *An Elegy* (Cobden Sanderson 6s.). By this opening poem on the death of King George V and by the final " Stanzas " to England, Mr. Blunden shows himself to be a laureate poet without the laurels. None of the empty conventional phrases, so hard to avoid in " patriotic " verse, are here. The first poem has the simplicity of true mourning, the second is the best poem for peace I have read. I quote from them both:

An honest King's the noblest work of God—
Now passes one whom all the world termed so.
Some terrified the highest with their nod,
This Monarch held no subject high or low.

Whatever passion raged, it shall be known,
He but appeared or spoke: that storm was overblown.

Whatever Party claimed as right or wrong,
That he was wise and kind offended none;
Therefore our love shall be his evensong;
All dwellers in the dark and in the sun,
In the most populous, the most lonely places
Shall set a King among their old familiar faces.

. . . . .

Reckon prosperity as a fleeting dance.
Grudge not adversity, for that unveils,
That counts the real wealth; yet if it chance
That England long advance with swelling sails,
Then be not proud; even Death, as English Donne
Interpreted long since, should not be proud;
Be unbeguiled. Measure not by the ton
The wealth of nations. Mark each golden cloud.

How every country makes report of you,
My country! With such attitude of praise
As Gibbon's Rome at high tide never knew.
Envy herself but offers you the bays.
Speak then with love and knighthood of each fact
Or project or desire of human good
In other nations; nothing thence detract.
Be the true best by you best understood.

Among the diverse themes in the rest of the book there are many that hark back twenty years, and one realizes that these re-creations of the French countryside and incidents are even more vividly acute in detail than his pictures of the present day. I noticed this sharpness of outline when the War scenes were conjured up in *The Bonadventure* and wondered when they would fade. Their intensity has increased rather than decreased with distance. Mr. Blunden's individuality of style does not decrease either; his own particular phrasing with its resultant rhythms, occasional harshness, concisions, and delightfully surprising word, are as indelible as ever. The sensitiveness of the writer is sometimes frayed into fretfulness or cynicism, but not for long. Like all great poets he is large minded enough to detach himself at times from life as it affects him personally and, by seeing it whole, to attain a true serenity and saneness of outlook:

Friendship knows little of frontier and descent;
Share noonday toil, and Peace shall come with the dew.

The usual process of collaboration has been reversed in *This Year: Next Year* (Faber and Faber, 7s. 6d.), Mr. Walter de la Mare declaring

that the drawings of Mr. Harold Jones were the excuse for writing his "headlong doggerel"; though he is the last person that requires an excuse for setting down his inimitable and whimsical fancies. The verses are particularly full of them this time, for he has looked at the pictures with the enquiring observant eyes of a real child, noting all the delicious details that we grown-ups miss or ignore. One suspects that "Books" is largely the experience of his own early reading, and the well-loved stories and fairy tales are precis-ed with an intimate and affectionate touch. "Santa Claus" seems the most seasonable poem to quote from:

On wool-soft feet he peeps and creeps,
  While in the moon-blanched snow,
Tossing their sled-belled antlered heads,
  His reindeer wait below.
Bright eyes, peaked beard, and bulging sack,
  He stays to listen, and look, because
A child lies sleeping out of sight,
  And this is Santa Claus.

The pictures also cast a spell, for there is something—in their colouring, the posture of Santa Claus, the flames of the bonfire—that stirs an old thrill, the one that Strewel Peter once gave.

Animals are too often sentimentalized when their thoughts are imagined in verse. It is refreshing to find *A Book of Uncommon Prayer* by George Scott-Moncrieff (Methuen, 3s. 6d.) truly uncommon in this respect. The fine woodcuts are by Robert Gibbings. Although the technical ability of the verses does not quite match the merit of their content there is a singular charm in the combination of animal knowledge and human piety which makes the poems memorable. This, for instance, is "Owl":

More silent than my muffled wings,
  In silence, Lord, Thy greatness shows,
Thou hast no need like bird that sings
  For light Thy triumph to disclose.

The darkness lying like a shroud,
  Translucent but to wiser sight,
Shall pick me from the heaving crowd
  To glide with God across the night.

For the Lonely by Sarah Litsey (Favil Press, 3s. 6d.) is a narrative study of four people and their inter-relations. Far from being pedestrian, as blank verse often may be, the lines are packed with beautiful imagery and are of great intensity. So symbolical is the language, and so very tense every incident, in fact, that the story has a rather cloying effect on the reader, and this is accentuated by Scilla's readiness to slip from one man's arms to another's and back again. Had there been some contrasts of homeliness or even humdrum in

their lives to bring these folk upon the realistic plane their story would have been poignant and powerful. *By the Way* by V. Morrogh, also from the Favil Press (3s. 6d.), is a book of pleasant but hardly distinctive lyrics, with a nice category of sea-birds in "The Fishers."

Frederick Johnston's book, *Pale Maidens*, is beautifully printed in Italy at the Verona Press (3s. 6d.), and the poems, partly of Italy, have a curious elusive style. He keeps much of their import to himself, refusing to let his readers share more than a part of his secretive and unusual fancies. Yet they attract while they baffle us, as in "Italian Noon":

> This sorcery in the olives (this grey flautist).
> So, all a noon to print
> With the cicalas' breezy plaint,
> Thrice-glittering hist, hist-hist.
>
> Oh tell me Lorelay, tell me, how
> Return to your dumb lake
> Your double-solemn treble-solemn mist,
> The vow?
>
> I will be kissed
> With the merciless kissing of Lamia,
> Be the coffin of a song left agape on a bough;
> As it were a sorcery, as it were a cicala.

Italy has several of Christine L. Henderson's travel poems, which conduct one all round the world, allotted to her in *Ship's Wake and Road's Lure* (Lovell, $1.00), but she is approached in a pictorial rather than an imaginative manner; thus, in "The Heart of Naples":

> Madonnas in strange little shops, strange foods of doubtful hue,
> Goats a-straying, donkeys braying—Naples always like a fair—
> Down the lane, look! plumed Vesuvius soaring up into the blue!
> And children, children, dark-eyed children everywhere!

Of the many small volumes by members, contributors and others, only a few can be mentioned this time, and cursorily, each for its distinctive feature. Amey Smyth, in *Masks and Gypsy Music* (Poetry Pub. Co.) seeks to catch

> . . . the colour of the gypsy soul
> That sings in old cafes in Hungary—

Vera I. Arlett shows us in *The Wind Rider* (Combridges, 1s.) that her lyrical sensitiveness and religious awareness have deepened since her last book. "All Saints' Day" proves this the best, I think:

> Winter keeps quiet house; and all must pass
> His frost-bound way, and dwell awhile with him,
> Until the first fresh February grass

Feels life astir within each small green limb.
But as we come to winter's long repose
We find a store of kingly treasure there;
All the bright summer, like a living rose,
Keeps thoughts and memory rich beyond compare.
There is no joy like that which once was ours,
And beauty from the past is never poor;
It may be all our lost and loveliest flowers
Sleep in the mist that hides November's door;
And could we hear, the Saints have much to tell
Of Death and Life, that make one miracle.

Reginald Eva, too, in his own way, establishes the merit of his former work in the new book, *The Cobweb* (Combridges, 1s.). We are not disappointed when expecting some good sea-phrases in "Beachy Head," but the predominant note in the book is that of immanence, sounded gravely in several poems and unexpectedly in "God":

I sought Him in the mountain and the sea,
I sought Him in the sunset and the dawn—
But found Him not; He was too high for me.

I turned aside and walked despairingly
In my own garden-plot and, from the lawn,
Out of a sparrow's eyes He looked at me.

E. D. Bangay.

The Poetry of Edward Faulkner

In the March, 1937, Poetry Review Mrs. J. Marion Soper drew attention in a very discriminating and sympathetic appreciation to the death of John Edwin Faulkner, poet and critic, for so many years associated with the *Western Morning News*, and now his old friend and colleague, Mr. C. J. Arnell, has through the medium of the Poetry Publishing Company, Exeter, issued *Selected Poems by John Edwin Faulkner* (2s. 6d.). Slim though this beautifully printed collection of forty-three poems is, it is so full of concentrated beauty, packed thought, finished craftsmanship, and true poetic achievement, that it is difficult to do it adequate justice in a short review.

To those who knew the author these poems will be valuable as revealing the depths of loneliness, keen sense of beauty and loving tenderness both to man and beast which underlay the witty, urbane, although kindly exterior which he exhibited to the world.

Edwin Faulkner, although a lover of life at its simplest and best, was a philosopher, and, be it said without reproach, one whose pity for the puny lot of man was not relieved by any spiritual hope. Nevertheless, this apparent lack of religious faith was tempered by a tonic stoicism. Sociable among his friends, he yet preferred to cities, where the ugliness and futility of men's fevered strivings are so conspicuous,

the sunlit breezy freedom of the moors or the still and haunted loveliness of the woods. Here, like the Keats of his own *Keats in Devon*, he was able, as in *The Forest Revel*, to people nature with the classical Mistress of Love and her attendant Oreads and Hamadryads, seen, though, in an English setting and through the magic glasses of a cinquecento painter. This poem would fittingly find a place in any anthology of the best products of contemporary poetry.

Like his literary contemporary and correspondent, Miss Alberta Vickridge, the star-fretted night sky had a great appeal for Faulkner, both as a contrast to man's transience in its indifferent immutability, and as a release from the cribbing limitations of human existence.

The best of his star poems is *The Wonder*, but this feeling also appears in *Nocturne*, *A Winter Night*, and *Onlookers*. This sense of cold space, indifferent to man, yet lovely in itself, is also found in *The Void Moon*, felicitously named "earth's serving-star," and more fancifully in *The White Serenade* with its picture of love dancing "to the silver lute o' the moon." Allied to this sense of lonely and vast space, are the poems which deal with the desert, itself again indifferent, but luring man from the troubling fever of civilization. Such poems are *The Mystic in the Desert*, *The Hermit and the Bird.*

All natural spaces recalled to Faulkner this contrast, and the idea recurs again, yet with a sense of pity, in *Great Haldon in Mist* and *The Lark on Woodbury Common.*

The note of pantheism, Spinoza's "Vision of the All" runs through many of the poems and, allied to it, appreciation of human love and the process of birth:

> The pain that doth foretell
> The fleshly miracle. (*Song of Birth in Spring*).

In this connection there is the fine phrase "The transubstantiation of the grass" (*Pantheos*).

In *The Childless Woman to her Violin* the author stresses the impossibility of suppressing the maternal instinct even by devotion to art. This feeling is accompanied by an intense tenderness towards all animal life (the shy things of the wild freely came to him of their own accord), which is simply and beautifully expressed in *Catkin's Epitaph*, which contrasts

> "The mystery and the miracle,
> The matchless grace, the vivid joy,"

which death had transmuted into

> "But just a little heap of bone,"

and in *Rabbits at Play*, in whose happy friskings the poet sees a world renewed, and whose "lovely play secure," he prays "good St. Francis" to keep "from gun and devilish trap."

Much more might be said did space permit, but attention must be drawn to two other types of poem, the literary-convivial with its pledging of the great ones of old, Rabelais, for instance, in "Carthusian

brew " and Gibbon in " noble port " (*Toasts in a Library*) and *An Invitation*, and the verse essays in classical religion such as *Verses* (suggested by the ancient divinities of childhood, Vaticanus, Cuba and Domiduca), full of the homely simplicity of Roman Republican domestic life, and *Hermes Psychopompos*, a plea for gentleness to the " little souls that pass."

Although there is little sensuousness about Edwin Faulkner's language, his verse is everywhere characterized by the use of the *mot juste*, and again there are terse but vivid pictures such as the " august parturience " of the ages (*The Philosopher and the Outcast*), " The thin, frail music of the leafless trees " (*Nocturne*), " like some Lucretian god " (*Spinoza*) and " Where browned and battered seamen congregate " (*Pantheos*). It is to be hoped that Mr. Arnell may be enabled to give to yet more of his friend's poems the stately permanence of print.

E. B. W. CHAPPELOW.

MYSTIC AND NARRATIVE POETRY

To the admirable and comprehensive Oxford Editions of the greater English poets, to which we are always referring enquirers, has been added *The Poems of Francis Thompson* (Oxford University Press, 3s. 6d.) —a collection first published in three volumes in 1913, arranged by the now venerable " W.M.", Thompson's literary executor and benefactor, who was " guided by a knowledge of his feelings and preferences during an unbroken intimacy of nineteen years ", making this volume a definite edition of the poetical works of Francis Thompson, and justifying again the wisdom and truth of Mrs. Meynell's judgment thirty years ago, when she said she had no misgivings as to Francis Thompson's poetry in the judgment of his country. " For no reactions of taste, no vicissitude of language, no change in the prevalent fashions of the art, no altering sense of the music of verse, can lessen the height or diminish the greatness of this poet's thought, or undo his experience, or unlive the life of this elect soul, or efface its passion."

The Poetry of the Invisible by Syed Mehdi Imam (Allen & Unwin, 8s. 6d.) is an adventurous attempt at the psychic interpretation of certain major English poets, amounting almost to a new approach from an Eastern standpoint to the actual significance of the poetry of Keats, Shelley, Byron, Browning, Tennyson and Swinburne. To Mr. Imam, " the poetic mind is in sensitive reponse to a vaster sphere of being," and " poetry is the resonance of Reality that rings its clangour through brain, eye and ear. It is a state of vision. In the heat of inspiration, the soul of the poet speaks of the fire in which it lives, of the scenes in which it dwells." In his book, he seeks " to unify the scattered intuitions of poetry into a whole in which may appear, as in a chart, an outline of the life of spirit bodied forth by the imagination of poetry ; the end is a threefold synthesis. Poetry as the sight of the

soul is firstly connected with physical science ; secondly with the psychical theory ; and thirdly with all forms of knowledge." Now that poetry is reduced to gross realism, a pedestrian account of trivial emotions and experiences, it is most encouraging to find attention directed to the "Divinity of Poetry," and to have the greater poets regarded as mystics and seers, able to explore the inner reaches of the super- (not sub-) conscious mind. Mr. Imam, in his tremendous task, is suggestive rather than conclusive : he indicates a vast field for penetration, study and interpretation, and we fervently hope that with the direction he gives, we shall now have a newer, dignified and super-scientific consideration of poetry and the poet's mind. He carries further into the psychic field the greater sensibility and the higher criticism to be found in Mr. Rostrevor Hamilton's *Poetry and Contemplation.*

It is pertinent to note that the only two living poets adduced by Mr. Imam are Lascelles Abercrombie and Charles Williams. Concerning the former, he says, "Abercrombie's poetry may remind us that neither the century of romance, the age of doubt nor the era of the machine can stand aloof from mysticism. The psychic sense is inherent in the poetic faculty itself. Its expression is not the privilege of any particular time or any particular literature." Mr. Charles Williams, according to Mr. Imam, belongs to the new age of poetry ; his depth of insight and gracious, serene and metropolitan style are recognized as being likely to justify his going down in the future "as one of the durable personalities of our times," particularly as "his poetry has left the desolate places of Hardy's pessimism and is fingering the chords for the agelong music of men—the music of Love" and "the high town of eternity."

Readers should not only follow Mr. Imam's definitions and interpretations, but should carry them forward on their own account, making this significant book the introduction and text book to a more complete appreciation of the psychical and super-scientific value of great poetry.

The present writer who derives from Coel-Hen, the last Celtic king of Strathclyde, is disturbed by Adam Fox, in his *Old King Coel* (Oxford University Press, 5s.), transferring his ancestors' headquarters to Coel Hill in Berkshire, but otherwise in his rhymed tale in four books, Mr. Fox deals agreeably with the character of the old king who is briefly described in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of the Kings of Britain*, and dealt with particularly in the late Sir Robert Maxwell's *History of Galloway*. He does not attempt any heroic narrative, and we cannot agree that he follows a traditional manner, for he reduced his tale to very plain simplicity justifying the comment that this writer's work contains "that note of impeccable sobriety which emphasizes the fact that all his poetry is at one with common sense and food and weather and the virtues," the narrative style being somewhat after the manner

adopted by Alan Brockington in *The Nazarene*, *The Face of Jesus* and *Common Epiphany*.

Constantius, the Roman Governor, who married King Coel's daughter, Helena, who became the mother of Constantine the Great, is the principal figure in this narrative, and is presented as a likeable individual, who had a very personal concern for the country and people in his charge. As an example of Mr. Fox's manner, we quote Coel's farewell to his Roman visitor and inquisitor,

> " Coleshill and I are proud
> to learn that we have been so soon allowed
> to welcome our new governor, although
> I scarce yet understand to what we owe
> so single an honour. If to spy
> was your real purpose, I am sure your eye
> will nothing find but truest service here,
> and nothing but respect and friendship greet your ear."

Constantius leaves with the remark:

> " Come to us soon. . . . We hope to see you all at Chichester.
> You must bring Helen, Yes, he said, I will.
> And so they left the king and Helen and Coleshill."

Later Constantius proposes to Coel's daughter. . . .

> " Dear Helen, you shall mother me, he said,
> if you will wife me too. Once we are wed
> you shall be satisfied. From rung to rung
> we'll climb love's ladder. Up there high among
> what's best and what's most beautiful eyes
> shall scan new worlds of beauty with surprise,
> look down from heights unutterably high
> and feel it were impossible to die,
> where with a thousand mysteries beset,
> the first and only lovers in the world are met."

Helen replies,

> " Constantius, I am yours. In me you take
> one who will gladly live, or not live, for your sake. . . .
> A secret flame
> burnt in them both and made the going home
> seem bright as noonday. And he spoke of Rome."

Mr. W. H. Auden the King's Gold Medallist

The Auden number of *New Verse* anticipated by a few days the announcement in the *Court Circular* that the King had presented to Mr. Wystan H. Auden the 1936 Gold Medal for Poetry. No further information concerning this unexpected award was forthcoming. The press generally made no comment, so the public who might have been interested remained unmoved or were left wondering as to which of

Mr. Auden's several volumes the award applied, the startling assumption adopted in some quarters being that the work which had brought him the King's Medal was the particular poem, "Spain," referred to in our last issue. Actually, "Look, Stranger," published during the period under review, is the volume—presumably the whole of the volume and not on account of any single poem therein, although left-wing tendencies are vigorously expressed throughout, and Mr. Auden must have been conscious of this when he accompanied Mr. Masefield to Buckingham Palace. This award is a curious reversal of earlier decisions; for the previous year it was considered that not a single volume merited the distinction of being awarded the King's Medal, and the only previous award had been to Mr. Laurence Whistler, who, it was recognized, seemed to be entirely uninfluenced by Mr. Auden, although the Auden-Spender-Lewis triumvirate had been commanding attention and under fierce discussion for several years.

New Verse, in its Auden Number, supplies a handbook to the award —a most interesting number, that is not entirely confined to eulogy. For example, Alan Tate, another subject of a recent review, states, "I haven't read any of Auden's new work, that is, in the past two years. Of course, I admire very much what I do know, but I have never rated him highly as, I suppose, you do. He is the best of his 'group,' but not much ahead of MacNeice. As of two years ago I may say that both Auden and Spender seem to be caught in a juvenile and provincial point of view. The well-brought-up young men discovered that people work in factories and mines, and they want to know more about these people. But it seems to me that instead of finding out about them, they write poems calling them Comrades from a distance. But they are excellent technicians, and Auden and MacNeice, at least, are both tough minds and real poets."

Mr. Herbert Read is allowed to say that Mr. Auden has "a certain retardation in growth: schoolboy jokes and undergraduate humour . . . a definite backsliding in the technique of verse. It is sad, therefore, to see a poet of Auden's ability aping the antics of Kipling and Byron . . . artificial verse is only worth doing if done supremely well, as by Pope: he is a little sentimental and indifferent to objective beauty," admitting, "Auden has brought a new vitality into English verse, an exuberance and inventiveness which it has lacked since Browning's death." (Others have recognized that Mr. Auden is in direct descent from Robert Browning.)

The Editor restores the balance by explaining "Auden as a monster: Auden does not fit: Auden is no gentleman: Auden does not write, or exist; by any of the codes, by the Bloomsbury rules, by the Hampstead rules, by the Oxford, the Cambridge, or the Russell Square rules: Auden writes about boys at school: Auden bites his nails: Auden uses rhyme: Auden uses any kind of form: Auden does not dislike A. E. Housman: Auden resembles Kipling more

than he resembles William Carlos Williams: Auden prefers Daumier to Mondrain: Auden would sooner read the Laxdœla saga than 'The Waves': and so on," concluding, "it is much to Auden's honour that he is so entirely and successfully a poet," probably because "the era in which Auden has grown up has been one of bewildered mediocrity, triviality and fudge."

Mr. Christopher Isherwood (his collaborator) should be read as an introduction to Mr. Auden's work, "Auden is essentially a scientist: perhaps I should add, 'a schoolboy scientist.' He has, that is to say, the scientific training and scientific interests of a very intelligent schoolboy. He has covered the groundwork, but doesn't propose to go any further: he has no intention of specialising. . . . Auden is a musician and a ritualist. As a child, he enjoyed a high Anglican upbringing, coupled with a sound musical education. The Anglicanism has evaporated, leaving only the height: he is still much preoccupied with ritual, in all its forms. . . . Auden is a Scandinavian. The Auden family came originally from Iceland. Auden himself was brought up on the sagas, and their influence upon his work has been profound. Auden began writing poetry comparatively late; when he had already been several terms at his public school. At our prep-school, he showed no literary interests whatever: his ambition was to become a mining-engineer. His first poems, unlike Stephen Spender's, were competent but entirely imitative: Hardy, Thomas and Frost were his models."

Mr. John Masefield's comment is limited to "all good wishes for the success of your tribute to Mr. Auden."

Mr. Auden was co-editor of *Oxford Poetry*, 1926–27. Messrs. Faber and Faber published the first edition of his poems in September, 1930, and have added eight other volumes of poems or plays since then, the 1936 *Look, Stranger* being a selection of what the author wishes to preserve of the poems written since the 1930 collection. We would not have presumed to define this list of publications as "vin audenaire"!

* * * * *

We learn from *The Times* that Miss Sarah Norton, daughter of the distinguished American scholar and critic, Charles Eliot Norton, in July, 1897, rescued Kipling's "Recessional" from a waste-paper basket, and secured its publication. Miss Norton retained this first draft, which has been sent to Lord Baldwin for presentation to the British Museum, where it may now be seen in the Exhibition Galleries of our National Library. *The Times* in a short leader points out that "keeping, with Rudyard Kipling, always meant keeping for future revision and improvement. Is it possible that he did not see how good the poem was and therefore how capable of the file; that he could toss into oblivion lines which had poured from a spirit finely touched to what the sharpest judgment must have allowed to be a fine

issue? 'The long bazaar may praise'—that, indeed, was never enough for him. Some purer, stricter judge must assure him that he had done well. Yet the very essence of his genius was to speak with and for the long bazaar at its best, to reveal to the long bazaar his own thoughts, humours, and aspirations. And of all his poems none has been taken so deep into the heart and conscience of the people as this now almost liturgical prayer in the hour of triumph. Whatever of Kipling may perish, this poem will live."

The banquet inaugurating the Rudyard Kipling Memorial Foundation demonstrated the universality of the appreciation of the genius of Kipling and how it touched all spheres of human thought and activity. The purpose of the Kipling Memorial Fund was defined in our last issue; by now the appeal has gone round the world, and we hope to be in a position to report substantial progress in our next issue.

"THE TWILIGHT OF THE FALSE GODS."

(*To the Editor of* THE POETRY REVIEW.)

SIR,—As an attentive reader of THE POETRY REVIEW, may I beg to express pleasure at the dislike shown to the writings of the so-called "modern poets" in the articles and reviews of recent numbers.

I would ask, however, that the paper should display a bolder front. If many of its writers unite in reducing these regrettable compositions to that one word "cacophony," should not the editorial staff of THE POETRY REVIEW be a little stricter in the matter of publication of poems, which frequently savour of the same school as those condemned by its reviewers?

(1) Let THE POETRY REVIEW take a firm stand and either frankly pronounce and prove by argument that prose sentences interspersed with dots, and such-like eccentricities, trace their true lineal ancestry to the works of Shakespeare, Milton, and Keats, or let it immediately determine to refuse to accept for publication in its columns these foolish and unsatisfactory experiments in word combination.

(2) I would also suggest that there be shown a more generous attitude to the works of the many meritorious writers, who consider that their art, like other arts, demands the exactions of form and care. These surely should be given pride of place and first attention.

(3) And could not the drawing of the outside public nearer be achieved by the arrangements of sixpenny publications of well-known poets, whose works are unattainable except at high prices, and by lectures in poor districts for very small (or no) entrance fees? Surely both these should be very important steps forward and, I trust, are not impossible. For the growth of the "modern" movement has as its origin the open confession of many—even educated persons—that they "do not understand poetry"! This fact has prompted those who, wishing to express themselves as poets, have not the energy or inclina-

tion for the intensive effort necessary to verse writing and are quite without a sense of rejection. These display their wares as they first write them, and pass off unfinished matter as if it were minted coin. I am convinced that the public would be the first to censure these efforts, were they educated in poetic thought and better read in its gracious medium—verse.

Of those who love the ideals of simplicity, beauty, strength and form, none will regret " the twilight " *or the passing* " of the false gods," any more than they would regret as a loss to art the passing of Cubist painters, or carvers of distortionate statuary, who also aim by illicit and inferior methods to attain their ends.

I would like to see these three much-needed reforms inaugurated, and following the death of Sir William Watson, that great master of form, the present time is assuredly the moment best fitted for their inception.

If works written as verse, but which do not obey the dictates of the ear or the laws of prosody, should be submitted to the Editor for his consideration and these works contain some intrinsic merit, more crying than their obvious lack of value as verse-writing, they should be published and printed *as prose*, and not as the metrical composition they spuriously affect. Surely this is only fair.

It would be a clean and manly action to defend the field of verse from an insidious and piratical attack, which the first poetry paper in the land should in no instance allow and cannot with decency countenance.

The Society by their action would earn the esteem of the public, who look to it for guidance and light; and in the words of that magnificent sonnet by S. R. Daniels, in THE POETRY REVIEW of July-August, 1935, will win again the poet's heritage, for:

" Beauty, and Love, and Truth the poet chose.
Beauty of sound, the Vision, and the Thought,
These were the trilogy the poet sought,
The dreams that soothed and saddened his repose."

etc., etc.

May I assure you, Mr. Editor, of my loyal support in every matter that pertains to the elevation and furtherance of our great brotherhood and its effective expression in poetry and true verse.

Oakham. Yours, etc.,

ARTHUR ROW.

ON THE ART OF POETRY

(*To the Editor of* THE POETRY REVIEW.)

SIR,—In the very interesting article on this subject appearing in the Sept. number of THE POETRY REVIEW, there is one statement to which, with all due deference to the author, I feel compelled to take exception, namely, that " Animals, though possessing higher senses than our

own, have no perception of beauty because their plane of intelligence is too low."

The author has not specified in what sense the term "beauty" is employed, whether restricted to indicate the property or properties which are satisfying to the material senses—the nose, the eye, the ear; or to the intellect, the aesthetic faculty, or the moral sense; or whether utilized merely to express the abstract quality characteristic of such properties, namely, "the beautiful."

Even assuming the term to have been used as in aesthetics, which, in addition to the sensuous qualities characterizing "beauty" in its narrower sense, comprises the sublime, the tragic, the comic—I unhesitatingly declare as a result of half a century's acquaintance with animals of various kinds in this and other countries, that not only have animals a keen perception of "beauty" and its opposite, ugliness, but also of the tragic and the comic.

In the light of our accumulated experience and knowledge it is impossible to believe that animals have persistently acquired and preserved their strikingly enhanced beauty throughout the mating season for the supreme purpose of attracting those who are incapable of perceiving it.

When the wooing peacock shakes and rustles his gorgeous fan as he patiently circles round and round his inamorata, sedulously side-stepping that his beauty may ever confront her—when the quarrelsome ruffs, aflame with love and jealousy, pirouette and pose in turn, to flaunt their feathery finery before their lady-loves, the reeves—can there be any doubt that each party is respectively conscious—the one of the beauty he thus displays, and the other of the beauty she contemplates and admires?

Why does the bower-bird so assiduously adorn its dancing-hall with flowers and other decorative objects if it has no perception of beauty?

Who can say that the eagle, with his marvellous perspicacity and range of vision, majestically wheeling heavenward in ever widening circles, has no perception of the beauty unfolding itself beneath him in stupendous panorama of mountain peaks, forest, rivers, shore, and ocean?

Again, what of the dazzling butterflies and other gorgeously armoured members of the Insect World endowed with their marvellous sense of colour?

And not only this, for there are those of the animal and insect worlds whose ears are attuned to frequencies—to melodies of Nature's music wholly outside the range of human ears; with eyes sensitive to light rays, disclosing, maybe, vistas of inconceivable beauty utterly imperceptible by man.

Vastly better off and infinitely superior as man may deem himself in his huge crowded cities of bricks and mortar,—the animals nevertheless are perpetually surrounded by boundless majesty and grandeur,

live their lives amidst a riot of colour, of fragrance and of beauty for which man himself has conceived the profoundest admiration.

To believe that the Infinite Creative Mind has surrounded these—the vast majority of His creatures, with beauty so extensive, so varied, so indescribably sublime, and has not endowed them with the power to perceive it, appears to me little short of heresy.

Would either Keats or Shelley have admitted that the nightingales perceived no beauty—experienced no rapture when singing to the moonlight the songs which so enchanted and inspired these poets? Had they indeed believed this, they never could have felt or written to these songsters the immortal melodies wherein we now delight.

No poet who has lived amidst the creatures of the Wild, watched them at play and at variance, or when sudden death has made one of them its victim, who has listened to their voices, understood them and loved them—can doubt for a moment that they possess a keen sense of beauty, of tragedy, and even of humour; so closely do their emotions and reactions correspond to those of man.

To take one animal only as example; during the last fifteen years I have handled some fifty wolves and wolf families, of many of whom I have made life-long friends. Every morning for an hour or more five of these I take for a promenade in the lovely flower-decked gardens of the Zoological Society; and it is surely evidence of their sense of beauty that they should prefer to linger where the flowers are most beautiful, and inhale with delight their refreshing fragrance, at all times alert to detect a new shrub or blossom wherein to plunge their ever questing and super-sensitive noses.

I will even go so far as to challenge, in the passage quoted, the inference that in the case of the animals now inhabiting this planet, their intelligence—in the higher forms other than man—is lower than that of Homo sapiens; my reason being that this species—although familiar with the tabulated experience and knowledge accumulated over thousands of generations, placing at its disposal colossal natural forces and unlimited materials for the ensuring of its well-being and its evolutionary progress—is nevertheless knowingly and deliberately applying these with unprecedented intensity to the devising and production, on a scale unparalleled in its history, of the very instruments to encompass its own destruction—and this admittedly by methods of indescribably revolting cruelty.

In contradistinction to this insane and suicidal practice of Homo sapiens, we find these other animals of "too low intelligence" everlastingly devising and practising the most ingenious methods, devoting the most assiduous attention and maintaining the most strenuous efforts to ensure the preservation and welfare of themselves and their posterity.

Sincerely believing that Poetry—when of unequivocal lucidity, in full command of the irresistible power of rhythm and aware of all the

subtle magic of sound-wave frequencies—constitutes a latent and mighty force for the arousing of appropriate human emotions,—I cannot imagine grander or nobler subject matter, nor any more urgently waiting on the poets of to-day, than the awakening of mankind to the terrible doom assuredly menacing the world's civilization in consequence of man's betrayal and repudiation of love, of truth, and of justice, and his deliberate prostitution of the blessings of heaven for the accommodation and service of evil.

To these redeeming principles one can but continue to appeal and to pray

> Love, Truth and Justice, blessed are ye three,
> and trebly blest the Souls wherein ye dwell:
> God grant in the World's Soul ye henceforth be
> loved guests—and Heaven no longer leased to Hell.

Junior Carlton Club. S.W. DOUGLAS S. S. STEUART.

THE PRODUCTION OF POETS' PLAYS

(*To the Editor*, THE POETRY REVIEW.)

SIR,—An association like The Poetry Society should be able to promote a special theatrical season devoted (*a*) to sound plays written round poets, such as Miss Dorothy Hewlett's recent treatment of Keats, the Byron play of some years ago in which Mr. Esme Percy made a profound impression, and Miss Grace Carlton's fanciful Shelley, and also (*b*) to the revival of poets' plays. This generation has not felt the fascination of Stephen Phillips's verse drama, and there is substance in Browning's plays and beauty in Tennyson's that would make an appeal. But each type needs interested and influential backing.

London, S.W.1. Yours, etc., EDWARD GRACE.

A correspondent points out that the greatest poets of our race are Londoners. Yet our streets and public places have nothing to remind us of them. Here are some of a wonderful galaxy:

Geoffrey Chaucer was the son of a Thames-street vintner.

Edmund Spenser was born in East Smithfield, in that "merrie London, my most kindly nurse," of which he sings—a tailor's son.

Milton's father was a scrivener in Bread-street, Cheapside, where the poet was born.

Herrick is another Cheapside poet.

Gray, of the "Elegy in a Country Churchyard," was born in Cornhill (a housebuilder has actually put up a tablet there).

Alexander Pope was a Londoner.

Keats's birthplace was over his father's livery stable by Moorfields.

Thomas Hood was born in The Poultry.

To this list other correspondents add Blake, Browning, Swinburne, Byron, Ruskin and Charles Lamb.

THE POETS' FELLOWSHIP:

THE PREMIUM EDITOR'S REPORT

This has been a very difficult selection to make, as there were at least six outstanding contributions, and it does not seem desirable to divide up the award amongst so many.

The number of poems received was slightly larger than last time, but it seems important to raise our standard as far as possible, so that the number in the lists is not larger. It has to be remembered that any author who has one poem Commended finds his name in the list, regardless of the merit of his other contributions. This tends sometimes to swell the lists unduly.

At any rate, the four contributions which have been chosen for the awards are all well up to our standard.

Particularly noteworthy is the advance of Mr. Chappelow, and the fine quality of his present poem. Mr. Chappelow is already well known to readers of THE POETRY REVIEW, and so are Phoebe Rayner and M. E. Mitchell. Miss Radcliffe Binnington has also come right to the front, although rather more recently.

Our awards are to: E. RADCLIFFE BINNINGTON, Louth; E. B. W. CHAPPELOW, Blackheath; M. E. MITCHELL, London, N.W.; PHOEBE RAYNER, Rivington.

Amongst those *Highly Commended* especial mention must be made of H. ESCOTT and ARTHUR LYNNFORD-SMITH.

HIGHLY COMMENDED.

T. E. Casson, Ulverston;
N. K. Cruickshank, Stoke-by-Clare;
B. D-H. Dix, Folkestone;
O. C. Dougan, London, N.;
H. Escott, Bradford;
Norah M. Horton, Burnley;
C. Wrey Gardiner, Teignmouth;
I. Sutherland Groom, Bristol;
E. Doreen Idle, Haslemere;
Irene H. Lewis, Dorking;
R. McKie, Hove;
Edith Mary Mann, Dovercourt;
B. F. Pargiter, Aldershot;
Arthur Lynnford Smith, Wanstead;
A.D.L.W., Bedford;
E.H.W., Whimple.

COMMENDED.

Mary Alexander, Epsom;
Kathleen Anderson, Kingswood;
Vera I. Arlett, Worthing;
Elizabeth Barrett, Seaford;
Dennis Birch, Taunton;
Langford Budville, Worthing;
M. D. Cameron, Inverness;
R. G. Duff, Teignmouth;
Evelyn M. Finn, Honiton;
K. D. H. Fremantle, Bletchley;
Lyndall Frost, London, W.;
Sophia Harbin, Yeovil;
Margaret Lockerbie-Goff, London, N.;
Dulcie Eden Greville, Wakefield;
Amber Lloyd, London, S.W.;
Enid W. Mark, South Croydon;
Margaret Ormiston, Lon., S.W.;
Iërne Ormsby, Thurgoland;
T. Pittaway, Frome;
E. H. Ray, Whitchurch, Glam.;
Brenda F. Skene, London, W.;
Hilda M. Slade, Ramsgate;
Mabel K. Toovey, Amersham;
L. Watts, Plymouth.

The usual premium competition is continued. MSS. should be addressed to "The Premium Editor, THE POETRY REVIEW Office, 36 Russell Square, London, W.C.1," before February 1st, accompanied by stamped addressed envelope, and if criticism is desired, 2s. 6d. (For a more detailed postal criticism, 5s. should be sent.)

A "tea and talk" meeting of the Poets' Fellowship (a verse-writing group of members) will be held on Saturday, February 12th, when Mr. J. H. Chapman will initiate a discussion on the "enigma of poetry." Tickets at the usual rate must be applied for by February 11th.

The Rev. H. Escott, M.A., member and contributor (143 Wilmer Road, Heaton, Bradford) invites contributions to an anthology of contemporary religious verse, representing the Christian thought and devotion of the present time.

The Poetry Society of Georgia notifies us that the Barrow prize of fifty dollars for a poem on any subject is an open competition, closing on April 15th. Typewritten entries, with name of competitor in a separate envelope endorsed with title of poem, should be addressed to the Chairman, Mr. S. J. Stern, 217 East 39th Street, Savannah, Ga., U.S.A.

The popular quotation calendars for 1938 are of the familiar type, but the new editions of the Tennyson, Burns, Shakespeare, "Noble Thoughts" and "Animal Lovers," published by Messrs. Raphael Tuck and Co., will remain attractive, ornate and apposite favourites. Readers might with advantage to themselves suggest variations on the old themes. With a little ingenuity a vast amount of miscellaneous material could be collated effectively. Messrs. Delgado, Ltd., provide another Kipling calendar with generous quotations and a calendar of the same Master's dog stories, illustrated by G. L. Stampa, and a nature calendar is furnished with pertinent weekly comments by Sir W. Beach Thomas, the distinguished observer and anthologist of country life.

WANTED! REJECTED POEMS

(*To the Editor of* THE POETRY REVIEW)

DEAR SIR,—I wish to publish, at my own expense, some fifty poems, which have each one been rejected by publications of good standing. Should any profit come of this venture it will be given to charities approved by the Authors.

Poems sent to me for approval must be typed on one side of the paper, and a stamped and self-addressed envelope enclosed. The Authors must sign their poems, and state the name of the publication which rejected them. They should also name a charity; which will, I hope, be "The Sussex Church Builders." The title of the book will be "Rejected Poems."

Yours truly, F. KEELING SCOTT.

St. Mark's Vicarage, Brighton.

THE SHAKESPEARE RECITALS

To meet a continued demand and need the Council of The Poetry Society (Incorporated) has approved the revival, in a modified form, of the Shakespeare Recitals which were widely adopted and very effective in connection with The Poetry Society's active participation in the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre at Stratford-on-Avon rebuilding scheme.

This new scheme permits the introduction of dramatic interpretation based on speeches and scenes from Shakespeare and will be an addition to the long-established examinations in diction and verse-speaking.

Candidates may enter for a Shakespeare Certificate, for which at present there will be one class only, the minimum age of entrants to be 15 years.

Candidates will be required to do two speeches or in conjunction with another candidate to do a duologue, or three candidates may combine in a short scene. Each entry will be individual and if duologues or triologues are adopted the parts must be interchangeable so that in fairness to each individual the candidates may be heard in two or more parts. Candidates doing solo speeches will be required to present two—one a test piece (for the time being either Portia's "The Quality of Mercy" (*Merchant of Venice*, Act IV, Sc. 1), or "If it were done when 'tis done" (*Macbeth*, Act I, Sc. 7), and one other individual speech selected by the candidate. No fixed piece is imposed for the duologue and triologue sections, but a list of suitable items will be supplied on application. The entrance fee for each candidate to be 7s. 6d.

Candidates may be heard at any ordinary audition, but it is suggested that a special feature be made of the Shakespeare Recitals, particularly by schools, when a special adjudicator will be provided, and that this dramatic recital should be a school event given before an audience, the culmination of a term's work.

* * * * *

Mr. Guy Pertwee, V.P., at the public recital by holders of The Poetry Society Adult Silver Medal for Verse-speaking seeking to qualify for the Gold Medal on November 13th again pointed out that more depended on the choice of piece than many candidates appear to realize. It was necessary that it should show the breadth of their powers, their capacity for personal poem production and sustained effort. It was not sufficient to present some little or unimportant or merely entertaining piece, and he did not think some of them were wise in concentrating on a sonnet which is always difficult to speak well and in itself does not allow sufficient scope. Something more was needed to show breadth and depth of the piece and of the speaker. Mr. Pertwee considered that audibility and articulation were definitely good but in some cases the speakers failed in continuity of mind as well as voice, accompanied by too emphatic stresses and false emphasis. Several candidates were more concerned with metre than with rhythm or were too conscious of their effort and lacked the necessary eurhyth-

mical co-ordination. However well they have done previously, the occasion had been too much of an ordeal for them, showing that they were not equal to all circumstances and had not attained artistic maturity. Again, some candidates handicapped themselves by doing pieces not appropriate for their age or sex. "My last Duchess" for example, could not be spoken effectively by a young woman and other poems were too masculine to be rendered by a woman's voice.

The GOLD MEDAL was awarded to MILLICENT LOCKE and KATHLEEN PHILLIPS. Olwen Rees and Evelyn M. Thornley were very highly commended and placed *proximae accessit*. The examiner in his remarks concerning Miss Locke said she secured the mood of the poem in Shelley's "West Wind," and spoke with authority, her voice being impelled by thought and imagination, and she developed an entirely different art and atmosphere in the second piece, both poems being given with quiet assurance and ringing clarity. Miss Phillips had a definite ring of words, both poems being suitably treated and excellently composed, with good timing and an admirable sense of differentiation, rising in each case to an appropriate culmination.

* * * * *

At a recent meeting of the educational Centre of The Poetry Society which, with a nucleus of L.C.C. school teachers, meets at 36 Russell Square on the first Friday evening of each month, Mr. S. Galin, M.Sc., Ph.D., dealt with "The Poets of Democracy." He pointed out that "poets are not isolated from contemporary social and political movements. They not only "hold the mirror up to nature" (Shakespeare) but are "an Image of the Times" (Ben Jonson). Indeed, they go further. In voicing the hopes, feelings, and aspirations of the people they become "the unacknowledged legislators of mankind" (Shelley). There is a long and majestic tradition of English poetry inspired by the democratic ideal. Beginning with *Piers Plowman*, it was continued in Milton, Cowper, and Gray, and reached its peak in the English poets of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic epochs :—Wordsworth, Southey, Coleridge, and Burns. Shelley became the poet of the young democracy and Byron vigorously expressed the discontent of the people with the England of the early nineteenth century. The economic and political stability of the early and middle Victorian years finds expression in the work of Tennyson whose poetry was not in line with the earlier tradition, but was a reflection of the prevalent mind of England. Walt Whitman is the poet whose work both in form and content breaks with the Victorians as represented by Tennyson. He became the chief prophet of democracy whilst William Morris was the poet of the young English Socialist movement.

"The influence of Whitman is observed directly in the poetry of Edward Carpenter, but more indirectly and very powerfully in the poetry of the later Edwardian and Georgian poets like Masefield and

Gibson. To-day Auden, Cecil Day Lewis, and Stephen Spender, protesting against the notion of "abstract art" and "art for art's sake," identify themselves enthusiastically, indeed, passionately, with the current social and political movements. They would take as their text the following lines of Keats:

> "None can usurp this height, returned that shade
> But those to whom the miseries of the world
> Are misery and will not let them rest."

The sensitiveness of poets to the life of their time was illustrated by the following quotations from a poem which might be taken as a description by one of these modernist poets of the rise of modern "ribbon suburbs" and of man's increasing control of nature as seen in the remarkable developments of machinery:

> "I exult to see
> An intellectual mastery exercised
> O'er the blind elements . . . almost a soul
> Imparted to brute matter. I rejoice
> Measuring the force of those gigantic powers
> That, by the thinking mind, have been compelled
> To serve the will of feeble-bodied man.
>
> "At Social Industry's command
> How quick, how vast an increase! From the germ
> Of some poor hamlet, rapidly produced
> Here a huge town . . .
> Where not a habitation stood before,
> Abodes of men irregularly massed
> Like trees in forests."

Who was this poet? Can any reader identify the quotation?

* * * * * *

The Very Rev. C. A. Alington, Dean of Durham, pointed out in the *Daily Telegraph* that Edmund Spenser, who died on January 26th in the last year of the 16th century, deserves the name of "the poets' poet," and it is not necessary to be a poet to appreciate the magic of his verse. Perhaps Macaulay was right in suggesting that few readers master the whole of the *Faerie Queene* (or, as he says, are "in at the death of the Blatant Beast"—though he made a curious blunder there, for the Blatant Beast never dies). But those who are unequal to so long a chase might well read the two great hymns which he dedicated to "the Right Honourable and Most Vertuous Ladies, the Ladie Margaret Countesse of Cumberland and the Ladie Marie Countesse of Warwicke"—one of the noblest offerings ever made by poetry to beauty. He had written "in the greener times of his youth" two hymns in praise of Love and Beauty: he now proposed "by way of retractation to reforme them," and to take Heavenly Love and Heavenly Beauty as his theme.

When Spenser turns to speak of Heavenly Beauty, he knows that he cannot " presume to picture so divine a wight," but he knows that the earthly beauties which he sees are a true guide to his imagination :

Cease then, my tongue, and lend unto my mind
Leave to bethinke how great that beautie is
Whose utmost parts so beautiful I find.

Had our hymn-writers imitated Spenser's reticence we should have been spared those empty pictures of heaven which leave so depressing an impression on the mind of the average man. Heaven, for him, is the full realization of divine goodness seen either as Beauty or as Love, for the two ideas are to him inseparable. He has no doubts as to the reality of beauty and has nothing but scorn for those who regard it as a mere " mixture made of colours faire " ; it must, he knows, be something more than this " that workes such wonders in the minds of men."

* * * * *

Caradoc Evans in a characteristic criticism of his " nation's festival of self-praise " makes some scathing remarks which may be applied equally well to other similar and more or less imitative " festivals " (*sic*). After asserting that competitive greed is an abomination and murders artistic endeavour and that no choir has a repertory of more than a dozen pieces or a singer more than a dozen songs, he insists that the National Eisteddfod attracts only the mediocre. " It has no artistic standard and unless it be born again it will die. It has no place in the worlds of arts and crafts. It has given the world no great thought or even a third-class work. The standard of it is the lowest in Europe. It is the institution of a nation of penny whistlers. The highest reward it can give you will take you not so far as the Welsh border." We hear similar criticism of English rivals, particularly with regard to the absence of any real standard of judgment and of the conflicting " standards " of the distinguished theorists who contradict each other and are unable to distinguish between the lyrical and the dramatic or between declamation and characterization. The judicious grieve while the uncultured majority vow that everybody and everything are " wonderful," even their own bewildered patience.

A story is going the rounds of a smart cat which, when given a piece of cheese, of which it was very fond, would disappear for a time. Eventually its master from curiosity followed it and found it in the kitchen breathing heavily down a mouse hole. An equally clever young poet has evidently heard this story, for he surely cannot claim originality for *Cruel Clever Cat* published in a modernist periodical recently as a masterpiece of a gem :

Sally, having swallowed cheese,
Directs down holes the scented breeze,
Enticing thus with baited breath
Nice mice to an untimely death.

We do not think the verse is as amusing as the original prose story.

CONTEMPORANEITY AND ESCAPE

AMONG all the vague terms used by critics and literary historians "escape" is one of the vaguest. When a critic wishes to say that a poet refuses to face the facts of contemporary life, or the realities of existence, he dubs him an escapist. The word is particularly rife at present, and is an ever-ready weapon in the hands of the revolutionary and so-called realist. Anyone, of course, is entitled to its use; but the meaning will depend on the user's conception of reality. And that leads to a long philosophical discussion—too long for here.

It is, however, important to know what one means by reality in art. No one can lay down laws as to what is or is not reality: *Kubla Khan* is not less real than Marvell's *Ode upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland* although it is a dream-poem. The reality clearly resides in the imagination of the poet and his ability to "put it across": it should be his aim "to cast aside from Poetry all that is not Inspiration." [1] "To write well," says Croce, greatest of modern aestheticians, "depends upon having a clear intuition of one's own thought, even if it be erroneous." [2] When, for a slight example, Keats wrote of "stout Cortez" when it should have been Balboa, his great sonnet is not spoilt for us poetically. But this does not imply that the reality is purely subjective; on the contrary, "The more objective is a work of art, by so much more is it poetically suggestive." [3]

A poem then is neither worse nor better because it deals with contemporary things, provided that those things are not of such ephemeral interest as seriously to file down its objectivity available for later generations. It is here that the danger lies. Anyone who has studied Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel* will realize the difficulty of absorbing all the historical facts necessary for an understanding of the poem, which is too minutely political, and for that reason could never again be popular. Similar examples can be found in almost any age, including our own; but the special problem confronting us to-day seems to be this: The

[1] Blake's *Milton*.
[2] *Aesthetic*, English translation. [3] Ibid.

phenomenal advance of modern science has resulted in placing before us a bewildering number of new material objects, many of which are quickly improved upon or entirely superseded. Not a few of these are potentially valuable to a poet, but he has either to reject them as being too ephemeral, or to use them now and share their death.

The solution, which in true poets is probably reached intuitively, is to be an eclectic—to pick out those objects which in some form or other seem likely to endure for a relatively long period, and to divest them of their *extrinsic* contemporaneity: in the words of Blake "To take off [their] filthy garments and clothe [them] with Imagination." In the case of the aeroplane this has been done with considerable success by Day Lewis in *The Flight*, where even such difficult things as the "two hundred and forty horse-power" of his "D.H. nine" and "Bolts working loose of propeller, cylinder, bearer" are all transformed into poetry. Lesser examples are Marianne Moore's *To a Steam-Roller* and Stephen Spender's *The Express*.

But modernity is not merely a matter of material objects: Donne is modern when he talks of "mandrake roots," Yeats is modern in his *Byzantium*; nor can mere toying with gramophones, electric drills and skyscrapers ever result in the larger modernity. Alas! how many attempt it and fail!

> "This craze of being modern
> Eats like an acid into the soul,"

someone has said. And another depicts the plight of such a one:

> "the cars steal his swagger
> the trams his elan
> airplanes his aspirations
> bombs his individual purposiveness
> till he is left naked in the desert of his time."[1]

His tragedy is that he *cannot* escape, or (if you like) that he *has* escaped—into "the desert of his time."

That is morbid contemporaneity. But there is a healthier form which is the fruit of an adventurous outlook.

[1] Philip O'Connor, in *Twentieth Century Verse*, September, 1937.

" Even perfection," says Whitehead, talking of the culture of Greece and China, " even perfection will not bear the tedium of indefinite repetition. To sustain a civilization with the intensity of its first ardour requires more than learning. Adventure is essential, namely, the search for new perfections."[1] The search may for a long time be unsuccessful, men may spend years in trying to discover new routes to Cathay, and then a Columbus stumbles on a new continent, or a Nordenskiold eventually finds the elusive passage in another direction. Hopkins, one of the fathers of modern poetry, found the road to " new perfections " in the profundity of his experience—spiritual, emotional, intellectual :

" Generations have trod, have trod, have trod ;
And all is seared with trade ; bleared, smeared with toil ;
And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell : the soil
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.
And for all this nature is never spent ;
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things."

But any voyage of discovery can be interpreted as mere escapism. Hopkins, Pound and Eliot have been recognized as realists—writers directly opposed to escapists, and yet they too escape : Hopkins into the Jesuit Order, Pound to Provence and Chinese poetry, Eliot into Anglo-Catholicism and the England of Henry II. The muddle-headedness that has been at the back of the use of the unfortunate word escape should by now be evident.

Perhaps we can risk the paradox and say that a poet can only be modern if he is more than modern. Let the traditionists sit at home with their Old Masters and sets of classical authors, as long as they have somewhere a brother " Voyaging in strange seas of thought alone." " When man ceases to wander," to quote Whitehead again, " he will cease to ascend in the scale of being. Physical wandering is still important, but greater still is the power of man's spiritual adventures—adventures of thought, adventures of passionate feeling, adventures of aesthetic experience."[2]

TERENCE HEYWOOD.

[1] *Adventures of Ideas*, 1933. [2] *Science and the Modern World*, 1936.

THE CHANGE OF WATERS

IS a reflection more lovely
than reality itself?
With its uncertain quivering
of broken colour.
Elusive, yet so true,
waters sparkle green—then blue.
Lights, shadows, intercepted by wavelets
of every form and hue.
Alive yet dead,
True yet false,
Near, yet far away.
Another realm of dreams and play.

For with the set of sun all disappears;
Unknown depth looks up at us and leers,
and where was mirrored vibrant life and glory
a deeper truth reveals another story
of darkness, mud and weed,
where fishes live and breed.

These and horrors hid for ever
dwell at the bottom of some river,
lake or sea, and can be found
at any time, by those who wish to peer
below the surface glamour just to find
the things that trouble those who are not blind.

Reflections—beauty dazzles, for a time
we cannot see beyond, we gaze content
absorbed in what seems wonderful and bright.
Is it better so? is there more delight
for those who have no inner sight?
who never wish to probe and find reality,
who are content merely to look, not see.
Or is the pleasure still more strong and real
to those who know of evil wrong and sin,
yet still can find some beauty in a life
so full of turmoil, anger, pain and strife,
Who through reflections beauteous perceive
the mud and slime that sunset soon will leave.

ROSALIE E. de MERIC.

THE WOOD

DO you remember a green spring day
We spent together and stole away
From everything we knew?
Do you remember the way we took
Through three rushy fields beside the brook
And the wind was warm and blue?

The wicket gate creaked: I heard you say
"I don't suppose anyone comes this way"
As we breathed the moss-cool air
Beyond the world in a wood so green
Where shadow and sunlight danced between
And leaves danced everywhere.

We stole together from tree to tree,
Around our feet there broke the sea
Of million-headed blue,
Tremulous, wind-eddied blue.
And so profound was silence there
There seemed a spell that bound the air,
A silence the branches knew
As the wind ran trembling through.

And there we felt a change that tore
Our hearts, for life we knew before
Was hollow and useless now
As a lightning-splintered bough.
The chaffinch repeated the same refrain
Once and twice and thrice again
Hammering, hammering, pain.

And once and twice and thrice we knew
The grief the moment gave as through
That leafy still the same voice cried
Of joy that turned to pain and died
The instant of its ecstasy.

We dare not trust a look or word.
For each the other's tumult heard

And the wood that called us one
With arms that beckoned dark and strong
With dusty motes that danced along
The slanting shafts of sun,

With water-music far away
As dreams, with shades of moth-like grey
And moth-like silences,
With breathless turn of leaf and wing
With lightsome freckled shadowing
And dappled blue of day.

And with the green path twisting where
Who knows? We might not follow there.
We might not seek the singing stream
Or brush the cobwebs from a dream
And so we turned away
Along the path the way we came:
The wicket-gate, three fields the same
And then I heard you say:

"How changed is everything we knew—
The world that waits for me, for you
Can never be the same."
We heard but echoes of the song
Whose sweetness dies when love more strong
Than life has been denied.
The chaffinch repeated the same refrain
Once and twice and thrice again
Hammering, hammering, pain.

PHOEBE RAYNER.

WITH WINTER'S WIND

RIDE high! Ride high my thoughts!
Ride with the wind.
Leave fear behind;
Ride high! and ride in haste
Fear comes apace.

EDITH MARY MANN.

POETRY AS A REVELATION

A MINER I know, who was most enthusiastic about his W.E.A. economics class, once told me how bored he was by a brief course in poetry, which he frankly confessed was of no use to him whatever, since it was far too detached from his every-day existence. His attitude would not be considered unusual by a great number of people, many of them sincerely interested in novels and plays and responsive to beauty.

It is because of many recent discussions about the *use* of poetry that I am writing this now. My only justification for dealing so briefly and inadequately with so broad and deep a subject is that poetry, more than anything else in my life, has widened horizons, given more intense sympathies, caused that inflowing of beauty that tranquillises, yet lifts into ecstasy, jerked me from a coma of indifference to acute awareness; made me *live*, instead of just existing; "stabbed my spirit broad awake."

Yet there is this much truth in that miner's criticism of poetry. This expression of the *essence* of intense feeling and perception is not the whole of life, though for me and for others it may be the root. We cannot live on Parnassus for ever. We probably shouldn't appreciate it was Parnassus if we did. *Poetry* never deals with the *littleness* of life, with the common-place or mundane. Even though some ordinary or common thing be described, it is seen with a new eye, in a fresh glow that makes significant a beauty we had missed before. Poetry is the metal of life separated from its ore, though that one has a value of its own, and metal is rarely found without it.

But does *Life* mean just eating, sleeping, working, playing, or do we mean by the word some consciousness of being one drop in a great stream, of being the channel of some unknown, eternal force, when

> "Our noisy years seem moments in the being
> Of the eternal silence; truths that wake
> To perish never."

> "The world is too much with us; late and soon
> Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers."

What sides of life has poetry not revealed more fully to us? Even a mechanized environment inspires an Auden or a Spender, or even a romantic like Brooke, with "the unimpassioned beauty of a great machine," or a Toller or a D. H. Lawrence with a vigorous antagonism to it.

Poetry, throughout the ages, has dealt with our deepest instincts, love, fear, thirst for beauty, sex, self-expression, pugnacity. It moves from contrast to contrast. It gives a bewildering gamut of words.

Shakespeare's poetry, in the plays and sonnets, gives us the finest *universal* interpretation of life in English literature. Others, differing so widely as Milton, Donne, Tennyson, Keats, Browning, Kipling, Coleridge, Gerard Manley Hopkins, de la Mare, D. H. Lawrence, Tagore, T. S. Eliot, Masefield (I choose at random as *varied* a number as possible) reveal to us more clearly certain facets of this diamond of Life, as they turn it round to the light.

Most of us feel at different times in our lives an *echo* in ourselves to such attitudes to life as these :

"The desire of the moth for the star,
Of the night for the morrow,
The devotion to something afar
From the sphere of our sorrow."

"But what if I fail of my purpose here
It is but to keep the nerves at strain
To dry one's eyes and laugh at a fall
And baffled, get up and begin again.
No sooner the older hope goes to ground,
Than a new one, straight to the self-same mark
I shape me
Ever removed."

"Fie on it! oh fie! 'tis an unweeded garden
That grows to seed. Things rank and gross in nature
Possess it merely."

"Like as the hart desireth the water brooks
So longeth my soul after thee, O God."

"A riddle of life that is
A tangle of perplexities."

One could go on so, indefinitely.

Poetry is of the very stuff of life because it is fundamentally *rhythmical*. Rhythm is everywhere, in the regular and unbroken cycle of the seasons, in the sounds of the wind, in the movement of waters, in the courses of the stars, in the very processes of our ordinary physical life, in every passage from birth to life and death, in music, in painting; even in machines. There is nothing that lives that has not some inner rhythm.

But the lovely, changing rhythms of poetry, which disturb our senses so strangely, so powerfully, so subtly, are unforgettably nostalgic. Entranced by them we reach back in memory to some dim forgotten beauty, which now we see but in a glass, darkly.

> "It is old and plain,
> The spinsters and the knitters in the sun
> Do use to chant it; it is silly sooth
> And dallies with the innocence of love
> Like the old age."

> "When to the sessions of sweet, silent thoughts
> I summon up remembrance of things past,"

> "Winds take a tender tone, and stars a gentle fire
> And visions rise and faint, that kill me with desire."

And the stirring rhythms of many an old ballad.

> "Why does your brand sae dreep wi bluid, Edward, Edward?
> Why does your brand sae dreep wi' bluid,
> And why sae sad gae ye, oh?"

Ballad, lyric, ode, elegy, couplet, triolet, blank verse, free verse play their different tunes, but none lives without its pulsation of rhythm.

Life is incomplete without some revelation af beauty. Poetry helps us, perhaps more than any other medium to see it more acutely, more passionately, with a greater range. It is impossible to analyse fully, for the charm defies capture, the sensation of utter and satisfying loveliness conveyed in such lines as these:

> "The horns of Elfland faintly blowing."

> "Charmed magic casements opening on the foam
> Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn."

"Music, when soft voices die
Vibrates in the memory."

"Bare, ruined choirs where late the sweet birds sang."

"And now 'twas like all instruments
Now like a lovely flute."

"Five miles meandering with a mazy motion."

"A flute of reed for Thee to fill with music."

"For old, unhappy far-off things
And battles long ago."

"Still ever climbing to the restless spheres
Wills us to wear ourselves and know no rest."

Any thought about poetry at all leads us to dissatisfaction with the easy, the shallow, the half-truth. Perhaps one of its greatest functions is to make us want to be not only recipients of the poet's captured beauty, but creators in words of our own dim perceptions of life. We must express, as well as absorb, even if "we spend our days in stringing and in unstringing our instruments. Because the time has not come true; the words have not been rightly set. Only there is the *agony of wishing* in our hearts."

D. R. W. CARR.

RESIGNATION

NOW you are gone from me, this seems the best:
To leave the star-brimmed night we wandered in
To its deep solitude; and leave the thin
Sharp moon-edge on its piercing path, and rest.
These things you loved; they are not mine alone.
Let me forget the shadow-quiv'ring brake;
Forget the lisping of the night-cooled lake,
And all the dark's incessant undertone.
Forget the white lawns when the cold dews start,
Forget that long and breathless quietude
When dawn lights up the purple solitude;
Forget the garden-haunted scent of musk;
O I shall take the curtains of the dusk,
And fold them round my peace-desiring heart.

KATHLEEN ANDERSON.

CARMEN NATIVITATIS

NOT amid drifted snows
When the gaunt and barren boughs
Creak with their frozen weight,
And the river's an icy spate,
And the voice of the shrill north wind
Is the voice of a titan blind,
A threat and an agony,
A demoniac passing by,
Nor yet when the night is still
And the moon over field and hill,
Silver and cold, makes bright
Earth's coverlet of white,
Like a shroud for a virgin death,
And there's never a stir, a breath,
In the mute unambient air,
But only a sense of despair,
And snow's on the holly hedge,
Snow upon point and edge,
On gable and post and sill,
On path and on lawn, smooth, chill,
Do I dream as I sit with my dog,
Nose on paws, in the warmth of the log,
He and I and my life's delight,
Safe and glad on the festival night,
And the house with the Yule fires of love
And the confident comfort thereof
Is aglow, that sullen and gray
Broke the dawn of the first Christmas Day.
But in orient lands,
Where over waste sands
The camel trains go,
Long, awkward and slow,
With a tinkle of bells,
Past palm-shaded wells,
Do I dream of that One,
The carpenter's son,
In a world that is gone
Like a tale that is done,
Whose long colonnades

And marble façades,
Tall temples and porticoes,
Yet statelily rose
From the cities Judaean,
And in loud shrill paean,
With clamour and clang
Rome's tubas rang,
And from many an altar the smoke went up,
And red wine was outpoured from a sardonyx cup
To the huntress moon or the conquering sun,
Senseless, immaculate, carved in stone,
While, in manger laid,
Slept a Babe by a Maid,
A maid and a mother,
To whom no other
Lodgement vouchsafed they
But a cave and some hay,
And an ox and an ass
To chant Christ His Mass,
Who smiled as she heard
The ineffable Word
Plumed presences hovering,
Invisibly covering
With wing upon wing
The unenvied abode
Of the Chosen of God,
Sang out with irradiant pinions unfurled,
Acclaiming the birth of the Lord of the world.
O, thus do I dream of the carpenter's son,
Thus of that One,
Whose potent calm
Should bring hope and balm
To the sad, the slave,
And the honest brave,
Who trudged the drab way
Of common day
With never a hope
That the gates would ope
On aught lovelier, freer,

Till, lover and seer,
He came, the harbinger,
King, prophet and bringer
Of the soul's rebirth
And a new-born earth,
Where the poorest even
Might hope win heaven.
And when the old dream
Comes back with its gleam,
I long, O I long
In these days of wrong,
When all bonds are loosed
And beauty is noosed
By the hand of disorder,
And greed knows no border
And war no constrainer,
But swifter, insaner,
Slick science uprears
The doom of the years,
As my peak of bliss,
For this, but this :
His promised returning,
Whose feet for our yearning
Shall bring release,
And for discord peace,
And for want enough,
And for hate love,
Who shall give His treasure
In such rich measure
That sorrow and sighing
Shall cease and crying,
And the desert shall bloom at the sound of His voice,
And the valleys be glad and the hills rejoice,
Till, rapt, shall descend upon mortal ears
The hymn of the stars and the song of the spheres.

E. B. W. CHAPPELOW.

THE DEAD TRAMP

HERE where the sweet scythe's whisper is not known
And blackbirds and the linnet live alone,
He lay down softly, so,
And died and over him the deep weeds grow.

Pitying grow. So kindly they do creep
With little fingers weaving in the sleep
Of his unwrithen death,
That, with the wind, their stirring seems his breath.

They hid their fleshless brother swift away
And did not question if the worldsick may
So slough exhaustion off,
And living's gas-masked rigours please to doff.

Here where the grass absolves the quarried scar,
And nettle and th'militant briar bar
All search from them who hide,
Here where no footstep comes, and adders bide,
He came at evening, sighing, and lay long,
Watched, to and fro, the starlings' sunset throng,
Thought of the world, and chose
Nettle and dock and multitudinous rose.

E. RADCLIFFE BINNINGTON.

JEALOUSY

I HATED her: like a plague of flies
The unmurdered, immortal minutes of you
That she had gathered before I knew
Approach of your step, the turn of your eyes!

Fair am I; golden and white as Hope's advance,
Your day that perfectly wraps your every mood!
(I cried, angry, afraid in Love's solitude)
She is dark as forests of past romance.

She is the night, the night that is gone!
Or—the little black shadow cast by a future dawn?

C. HEATON.

REBEKAH'S NURSE

"It was well done, and thou shalt sleep again."—*Brutus*

DEBORAH travelled far—
From Nahor where the well-springs are
Over the sands
Of the lone lands
Vexed by the whip-speech of the drover bands.
She left the trees
The sycamores and oaks of the noon's ease,
Cherishing faces,
Child memory's dim traces,
Peace of the fells,
The music of sheep bells,
The wilted plain and the sand road to take
Leading to Canaan, for Rebekah's sake.

And still the camels trod
The furrows of the sandy sod,
Indigo-clear
The hills drew near
Vast dolphin backs that rose to disappear:
With sidelong glances
The cumbrous camels moved in desert trances,
And smothering sand
Subdued the wasted land
As her distress
Deborah's stalwartness:
But when she looked upon her foster child
Her heart took comfort and her eyes grew mild.

Then she would smooth her dress
And ponder on her loveliness,
Watch her eyes close
As the moon rose
Calming all heaven with its benign repose:
Then dreaming eyes
Would show her sweet Rebekah in strange guise,
Fawns of the mead
Emulous of her speed,
And her slow motion

The envy of the ocean,
And peacocks nursing their notorious pride
In their grace and in hers identified.

But Canaan's air disturbs
A stranger with odiferous herbs,
Early-born lambs
Lie with their dams,
And creamy kine are there and goodly rams,
There the bees strive
Honey-bags full to reach the flowing hive,
There the noon days
Quiver to hear their praise,
Evening and morning
Colour at their adorning,
And the false Deborah, hailed from lands afar,
Forgot sweet Nahor where the well-springs are.

She laid the twins to rest
At dewfall in their slumber nest,
When love would tether
Their limbs together,
Rivalry outlawed in the cooler weather :
If Esau wept
Deborah rocked the cradle and he slept,
If Jacob stirred
She calmed him with a word
And sweet flower scent
Distilled in the warm tent,
Such as they used in Nahor, to make good
Rebekah, in her time-dim childhood.

She taught them songs and glees
Remembered from her mother's knees,
Turning in age
To the first page
Of the long epic of her pilgrimage :
Then memory came
Floodlighting Nahor with a steady flame,

Shining on trees,
Broad oaks of the noon's ease,
Shedding its light
On Nahor at midnight:
Then Deborah said "I have received of good—
Two lands, two homes, and twice-told motherhood!"

I. SUTHERLAND GROOM.

WOULD I WERE HOME

WOULD I were home in England now
The cold dark days are done
And pastures green and golden plough
Are welcoming the sun.

Would I were home! for home to me
Is cast in pleasant ways,
A stone's throw from the southern sea
Mid happy Hampshire days.

I have a garden there that grows
Sufficient for my need,
A border wild with rue and rose
These hands have loved to weed.

And for the hours that leisure brings
To men who live as I
The fellowship of salted winds,
The freedom of the sky.

Or should the heart take inward turn
Ah! who could answer nay
To faun and forest, field and fern,
And summerland at play?

For now the wild white rabbits run
Around their earthen room,
The pheasant fears no sudden gun,
The rhododendrons bloom,

And here and there a quiet stream,
And here and there a nook,
Where Time himself has stayed to dream
And fools forget to look.

Singapore. C. E. H. JACOBS

PASSING BY

(*To be read slowly*).

Winter . . .
Twilight . . .
Loveliness beyond my window . .
Interlude 'twixt light and dark . . .

A herd I see of kine slow-moving,
Meadows green, grey-green, and brown lands,
'Neath a sky, pellucid, silver,
Subtly changing,
Amethystine;
Now, ah now—'tis flowering over,
Scattering bloom on
Kine slow moving,
Meadow,
Hedgerow,
Dusk of dim lands. . .

Red, black, brown cows,
White cows,
Pied cows,
Single
File,—
So—they go—in rhythmic wonder
Through the silence
And the stillness.

Now—a thrush—
Piercing through the evening hush—
Breaks the silence . . .
Thrills the tree-tops . . .
And I seem—to hear—a sigh—
Suddenly, the flower fadeth,
Drops the glory,
Dims the sky. . . .

Thus it is in winter, Passes
Sunset— By.

DOROTHY R. COLLS.

THE MYSTICISM OF WILLIAM BLAKE

A PSYCHOLOGICAL RE-EXAMINATION

THE mounting market price of Blakeana, despite the times, is more than a reflection of the scarcity of his poetic and artistic works. It is an indication of a belated appreciation of all he gave to the world in his creative span of three score and ten. The world is re-evaluating his life and works. We are scanning his contributions anew in the light of our recent discoveries into the motivations of human thought and action, which he perceived so clearly and advocated so strenuously in a life which closed just over one hundred years ago.

Mysticism was the key not only to everything he wrote and painted, as Professor Damon has stated, but indeed the key to all the aspects of his life. And the way to this mysticism is best entered through an examination of his visions, the allegory of his artistic and poetic design, the stuff of which all his creations were made. "My visions are representations of what actually exists really and unchangeably," he said. And again, "Excuse my enthusiasm, or rather madness, for I am really drunk with intellectual vision whenever I take a pencil or graver in my hand, as I used to be in my youth."

His first vision is related by his wife, "You know, dear, the first time you saw God was when you were four years old, and he put his head to the window and set you a-screaming." One is reminded of William Ellery Leonard, who has related a similar incident which occurred after the important locomotive trauma, the basis of his later adult phobia. There is an important distinction between the two visions, however. In Blake's case there was no objective stimulus; it was simply an hallucination, a foreboding of the imaginary scenes which were later to fill his mind, his poetry and his paintings. In Leonard's case there was a stimulus in the form of a cow's head which he mistook for the wrath of God coming upon him, a reminder of his infantile shock. For all we know there may have been a traumatic episode in Blake's early life which set him off on his later visionings, and yet there is not such a particularity of imagery accompanying this experience as there is in the scene which Leonard has described.

At the age of ten he came upon a tree filled with angels, and on another occasion saw them walking among the haymakers. In fact, most of his visions were of angels, and only once did Satan appear to him, " a horrible grim figure, scaly, speckled, very awful, stalking downstairs." His visions came to him chiefly at night, and some of them advised him well, as when the spirit of his beloved brother Robert appeared and directed him how to print pages of both words and illustrations from one plate, afterward tinting them in by hand. Thus St. Joseph revealed to him in his sleep how to mix his colours with diluted glue for greater permanence. And surely either these spirits or the visions were inspired, for we see, as a result of these suggestions, the most beautiful illuminated work since the Middle Ages.

We have here quoted most meagrely from a whole literature of visions which he has reported, to say nothing of those he generously poured into his poetry and drawings. It is at this point that we may attempt to apply the first explanations that modern psychological theory has to offer. That he was not entirely without some insight into the sources of his mental imagery may be gathered from the following: A lady once asked him where he thought he saw his visions and he replied, " Here, Madam," touching his forehead. A close study of his life and works leads to the belief that Blake's head actually was the source of these marvellous sights, that there was nothing hallucinatory in any of them. His was a case of trusting so strongly in the truth of what he thought, that he saw it symbolically expressed. He had no belief in the actual objective validity or existence of his visions, notwithstanding his statement that as he drew, his model appeared in front of him in space, moved its nose, or suddenly dropped away its chin. Consider the following which shows he was aware of their psychogenic origin: " A spirit and a vision are not, as the modern philosopher supposes, a cloudy vapour or a nothing; they are organized and minutely articulared. The painter of this work asserts that all his imaginations appear to him infinitely more perfect and more minutely organized than anything seen by his mortal eye." He may, perhaps, have believed in the supernatural origin of his visions in his youth,

when it is difficult to distinguish between reality and the world of phantasy, but in his maturity it is clear he understood their true nature as conscious mental creations.

It has been noted that the quality and number of his visions much increased after the death of his favourite brother, Robert. Blake watched at his bed for three whole days and nights until he died. At this moment he saw Robert's soul ascend through the ceiling, "clapping his hands with joy," a figure he is to use frequently in his later designs. Previous to this time he had suffered from a paucity of visionings, but from now on they were never to diminish again. In the conjuring up of these sights he relied greatly on the power of religion for some portion of his inspiration. Swinburne relates the following incident in this regard:

"A young artist, finding his invention flag during a whole fortnight, went to Blake, as was his wont, for some advice or comfort. He found him sitting at tea with his wife. He related his distress, how he felt deserted by the power of invention. To his astonishment, Blake turned to his wife suddenly and said; 'It is just so with us for weeks together, when the visions forsake us. What do we do then, Kate?' To which she answered, 'We kneel down and pray, Mr. Blake'."

His views on imagination throw further light. Jerusalem, the ideal city, as it stood for God, stood also for this power, and one can well conjecture that in thus exerting his power he felt himself rendering divine service. "Natural objects always did and do weaken, deaden, and obliterate imagination in me," he said. And again, "Why are copies of Nature incorrect, while copies of imagination are correct? This is manifest to all." Here is expressed not only his reliance on the figments of his brain for his models, but his assumption that as he saw, so did all others see. He saw all things through a glass, but gloriously, rather than darkly. "I question not my corporeal eye," he writes, "any more than I would question a window concerning a sight. I look through it, not with it." Imagination was part and parcel of his religion, it made up the "Body of God"; it was his constant source of inspiration, as a more traditional God has inspired others.

We have seen that he was a mystic, that as such he created pictures in word and line inspired by his visionings, that these visionings were almost always symbolically

expressed. But the interpretation of this symbolism, like all great mystery of art, presents difficulties, and it is doubtful whether a complete glossary of his mystical terms or a solution of their many contradictions will ever be possible. Like the mathematician's, his list of symbols was limited, and he often had to use the same term twice without bothering to explain to others what was so clear to his own mind. And yet they must have some meaning. We may say of them what MacDougall has said of dreams, " . . . it would seem to me absurd to regard (them) as the products of merely chaotic jumbled brain currents ; I have no doubt that they are allegorical constructions, however little confidence I may have in any particular interpretation."

Modern psychoanalysis, serving as a *Mittelstand* between the sympathetic interpretation of the poet and the clinical approach of the psychiatrist, has much to offer for an understanding of this intricate imagery. There is much of Freud foreshadowed in Blake's work, but Jung provides in this instance, as in his therapeutics, a broader understanding.

For the Freudian there is abundant material. Orc, Blake's favourite oft-repeated figure of Youth in Revolt, may easily be identified and his own temper raised to a literary symbol. Orc is the son of Los, poetry, and Enitharmon, inspiration, and as such turns towards his mother as he grows into manhood. There is here, surely, evidence in poetic form of a buried Oedipus complex arising from Blake's own Unconscious, an allegorical expression of his buried self :

> " But when fourteen summers and winters had revolved over
> Their solemn habitation, Los beheld the ruddy boy
> Embracing his bright mother, and beheld malignant fires
> In his young eyes, discerning plain that Orc plotted his death."

There are many Freudian symbols, the " golden pin " and " the cave," the " serpent," all expressions of the flesh. There is mention, too, of the " cup " and the " wand." There is Rahab, standing for sexual licence ; Los, the spirit, representing the Ego, while Tirzah represents sexual repression ; yet note that Blake charged Tirzah with weakness

of desire, not strength of will. There is one poem *The Defiled Sanctuary*, which may be taken to indicate Blake's disgust for the sexual act :

"I saw a chapel all of gold
That none did dare to enter in
And many weeping stood without,
Weeping, mourning, worshipping.

I saw a serpent rise between
The white pillars of the door,
And he forced and forced and forced
Till he the golden hinges tore :

And along the pavement sweet,
Set with pearls and rubies bright,
All his shining length he drew,
Till upon the altar white

He vomited his poison out
On the bread and on the wine.
So I turned into a sty,
And laid me down among the swine."

The Freudian implications are certainly clear. Yet heed also Professor Damon's interpretation that the Chapel is the Church of God, which all wish to enter, but must stand without until the serpent, the Priest, has entered, and desecrated the eucharist with his hypocrisy.

His hatred of all restraint and order, his defiance of government and the status quo may show a tremendous consciousness of guilt, a demonstration of the thundering power of a Super Ego with whom he was contending. His insistence on forgiveness as the first credo in any religion may be an expression of his revolt against all those punishing and avenging powers in the world which to the psycho-analyst are demonstrations of the presence, even in the adult, of resentment against an incompletely outgrown father-image.

There is more to be gone into to uncover completely this symbolism, which may be taken as an expression of certain clear universal truths, despite the possibility that it is at the same time a transmutation of his sexuality into verse. There is some presaging of Freud's doctrines in Blake's

description of the conflict between " Tharmas," the body, and " Enion," the sex instinct, which so harasses the soul of man. From this conflict, as also from the struggle between " Urizen," reason, and " Luvah," the emotions, is born the poetic faculty and inspiration. Blake has stressed the necessity for self-expression and has gone one better than Freud when he said, " Sooner murder an infant in its cradle than nurse unacted desires." And again, " He who desires but acts not, breeds pestilence." He has referred to what we now call rationalization in his styling of Hypocrisy as the cloak of Reason.

The psychological approach to this imagery is further aided by the use of Jung's types and allegories. There is more than a striking resemblance between Blake's "Spectre" and " Emanation " and Jung's " Persona " and " Anima," respectively. There is a close analogy which one discovered through poetic intuition and the other through analytic insight, between Blake's " Four Zoas," Urthona, Luvah, Urizen, and Tharmas—and Jung's four fundamental psychic functions—intuition, feeling, thinking and sensation. To the " Christians " and " Atheists " correspond Jung's Introverts and Extroverts. Both Jung and Blake place imagination at the core of the being, both stress the necessity for symbolism, both emphasize the value and importance of dreams, both teach that reason is a deceptive faculty, because the emotional side of self directs it. But the greatest value in using Jung's approach to an understanding of Blake lies in the former's concept of the " Archetypes " as the expression of innate, inborn tendencies to conceive and explain our world in terms of objects and principles. These " Archetypes " appear in all mythology, all folk lore, and especially in Blake's writings. Blake's " collective unconscious " has been especially fortunate in gathering, as it developed, the finest and highest types of allegorical figures. The conflicts that Blake describes as occurring in the human soul are the same as have troubled man since the dawn of time. These, surely, are Jung's " ancient, universal, and deep thoughts, the buried treasure of the past," which Blake drew on to describe to the world the

eternal verities, their inter-relationships and their effects on man. "It would be quite inappropriate to reduce the collective ideas to what is personal, and not only inappropriate, but even actually pernicious," says Jung.

The modern may well admire the enthusiasm with which Blake entertained and expressed his ideas. "The roadway of excess leads to the palace of wisdom." And one of his disciples wrote, in this vein, "Excess is the essential vivifying spirit, vital spark, embalming spice of the finest art . . . think only on excess, and only use medium to make excess more abundantly excessive." Here again Blake has divine example for his course of action: "Christ, being all virtue, acted from impulse, and not from rules." Expression, strong and unrestrained, was one of his most dominant doctrines; to be strongly moved and not express it was to breed poison. He has described this best in the two lines:

> "Abstinence sows sand all over
> The ruddy limbs and flowing hair."

In this day when regimentation is more to be desired than great beauty, when restraint is desired within the ever-widening bounds of a strict social code, it is heartening to contemplate Blake's fire and his freshness. Eagerly as he defied the dicta of his times, so earnestly does his future, now present, turn back with new tools for the understanding of the teachings of this creative mystic.

BENEDICT S. ALPER.

MULTITUDES

HOW many worlds can you see
With dim, doomed eye?
How many roses can you gather
Before they die?

Is there one star too many?
One wasted rose?
One heart that need not have broken?
Nobody knows.

A. M. WALKER.

PIGEONS IN SCARLET STREET

GREY street meets grey street; grey rows of houses
Climb towards the East like giant insects.
The wind runs down them, whirling on his breath
The wrack of smoke he's torn from chimney-tops
And sullen hearts of mills that blot the valley.
Volleys of russet mist obscure the calm
Quietness and majesty of clouds asleep
High in the blue, above the wrath of winds,
Drowsy with sun-bloom, split with rifts of gold.
Suddenly,
The seven pigeons cooing on the roof
Wheel to the cobbled street with clap of wings,
And coral feet down-poisèd to alight.
In dainty haste they search the cracks for food,
Designing pretty patterns as they roam,
Although but once there comes the perfect group;
While at each tread, the becks and dips of the head
Disclose the rainbows shimmering on their necks.
Then the bus toils up the hill.
Aloft again they flutter, and once more
Grey street meets grey street, and rows of houses
Stalk grimly out to brave the stinging East.

NORAH M. HORTON.

MY EPITAPH

PLACE gently, friend or foe,
Your feet where I may lie.
We have touched joy and woe;
And you must die.

Nor pass you quickly by;
For Time is swift and slow.
Rest you, and breathe a sigh,
And pray what prayer you know.

And in my tomb, my dust
Shall tremble at your prayer;
For join with dust you must,
Though I be otherwhere.

MOORE PIM.

A POET'S DREAM

I HAVE had the pleasure of reviewing on various occasions works in both poetry and prose by W. B. Yeats, but in order to do justice to his latest book,—that is to explain as far as possible its highly complex system of philosophy,—I found it necessary to study its contents very deeply; and even if I were thoroughly conversant with all the complexities of the geometrical philosophy he had embodied in *A Vision* (Macmillan, 15s.), and furthermore having to take for granted that a certain percentage of readers are unacquainted with such profundities,—although some may take a passing interest in esoteric lore,—I would have to limit my observations to within—comparatively speaking—a small space.

Not having previously read *A Vision* in its original issue, for private circulation some years ago, has made this present undertaking all the more difficult, and now Messrs. Macmillan and Co., Ltd., have brought out a handsome revised edition containing additional matter, and with illustrations. In my previous article on the *Poems and Plays* in THE POETRY REVIEW, I gave details as to the sources from whence some of W. B. Yeats's best known poems derived their inspiration, but the fresh source from which has emanated such cryptic knowledge was even more evanescent than any mythical or pseudo-historic basis, and thus throws a light upon his intuitive faculties, or else, as he explains they were details conveyed to him, and also to his wife, by those disincarnate beings whom he calls his "instructors."

Nevertheless the work contains what I consider to be a glorified nucleus of arcane philosophic principles whose expansion would fill volumes with transcendental knowledge, that is unless one happens to be so prejudiced as to regard those products of what could be named his own intellectual activities as mere "ben trovato," otherwise "nebulous moonshine." At the same time we must admit that there is a more or less hypothetic region regarded by many advanced thinkers to-day as "the borderland of science," or rather I should say those concepts of what may transcend

ordinary phenomena, and yet if anybody had the temerity to place these propositions in any form of category with the most advanced scientific observations a generation or more ago, such a thing would have been considered tantamount to lunacy, or else sacrilege, by the scientific faculty. Yet psychical research has discovered certain phenomena tending to prove if not actually, the existence of disincarnate minds, as it has evidence to the effect that there is something which is akin to mind, and this has been named a " psychic factor," and in order to form a temporary mind this amorphous intelligence must unite with a physical brain.

This is not a pleasant notion for serious contemplation, but I am inclined to take this conception from an agnostic standpoint, although I hold with a scientific writer who considers the view taken of the psychic conjunction with the living brain more credible than the so-called demoniacal possession. Nevertheless it can be generally admitted that his " instructors," to have communicated such a magnitude of abstruse philosophy, must be extremely intellectual, and as they say in W. B. Yeats's native country " all there," whereas that composite mentality of nondescript entities may be regarded as no good at all.

A Vision, although written by a poet, is devoted to the philosophic conception of the analogy between the cyclic progression of the human ego, that is the soul, in twenty-eight incarnations, and the eight and twenty phases of the moon during its revolution in the synodic month, and he has further taken as a symbol the passage of the sun, moon and planets along the imaginary path through the zodiacal constellations, thus making a period of about 26,000 years of our reckoning, and in the spiritual light a single day may be one of several generations. This is the Great Year of the Ancients, the Anno Mundi, in which a thousand years of Spiritual Ecstasy may seem only a day ; a beautiful idea so perfectly expressed by Longfellow in his poem *The Legend of Monk Felix*,[1] that saintly character, who whilst listening to the song of a bird was so entranced that a hundred years had passed him by. W. B. Yeats's

[1] I think that the same story is contained in *The Gesta Romanorum*.

poem, *The Wanderings of Usheen*, is based on the same theme.

This philosophy of life and death, which he has called a phantasmagoria, he made the subject of a poem, *The Phases of the Moon*, and which I briefly dealt with in my previous article. This poem is reprinted with *All Soul's Night* in the present work. I will now go more fully into the scheme of this poem in which two personages are introduced, viz. Robartes and Aherne, both of whom figure in others of his poems, also in his prose works, notably *Rosa Alchemica* and *The Tables of the Law*, and it consists of a dialogue between the two.

These are not persons, however, but symbols,[1] and are, as Æ said of his *Rosa Alchemica*, "images of phantasy," and these images he changed to what objective objects symbolized, and to him they do not exist for themselves but are only shadows of the unseen. He believes with Æ, that the *Anima Mundi*, "The Memory of Nature," associates symbols with certain events, moods and persons, and whatever the passions of men have gathered about them become a symbol in that great memory. William Blake calls such images "the bright sculptures in Los's Halls"; Æ also contended that this memory can be evoked by symbols, as did Blake who held that all events, all love stories renew themselves from those images. One is reminded of Walter de la Mare's Henry Brocken. It has been suggested that his symbolism was adapted from Gerard de Nerval, Stéphane Mallarmé, Verlaine and other French symbolists.

Robartes is a symbol of the mind, and it points in particular to the Poet's mind, and not being a student of magical tradition, I do not understand what the symbol of "fire reflected in water" means; nor do I know what symbol Aherne represents.

[1] W. B. Yeats declared in one of his books that directly a symbolism has possessed the imagination of large numbers of men, it becomes, as he believed, an embodiment of disembodied powers and repeats itself in dreams and visions, age after age. Æ found this to be strangely true, and I gave an account of one very remarkable instance in *The Occult Review* as well as Æ's recollections of past incarnations. Thus Aedh which is the Irish for fire, that is fire burning by itself, and it is also the myrrh and frankincense that the imagination offers continuously before all that it loves.

In the poem the two symbolic personalities as friends had been tramping the country road and it is evidently very late at night. Aherne listens as they reach a bridge; he hears a sound. There is a tower near at hand, and a man is within: he is evidently reading books of wisdom on account of a light being seen in his window. Robartes says:

> "And the light proves that he is reading still.
> He has found, after the manner of his kind,
> Mere images; chosen this place to live in
> Because, it may be, of the candle light
> From the far tower where Milton's platonist
> Sat late, or Shelley's visionary prince:
> The lonely light that Samuel Palmer engraved,
> An image of mysterious wisdom won by toil;
> And now he seeks in book and manuscript
> What he shall never find.

Aherne advises Robartes to ring at his door and tell him that all his life's labour

> "Will scarcely find for him a broken crust
> Of all those truths that are your daily bread;
> And when you have spoken take the roads again?
> * * * * *
> Sing me the changes of the moon once more;
> True song, though speech: mine author sing it me."

Then at Aherne's request follows an account of the philosophy in verse, spoken by Robartes whom Aherne addresses as author.

I will not tax my reader's patience or intelligence by giving even an epitomized account of what occupies pages and pages of the book, viz., the soul through each phase of its development, that is twenty-eight incarnations in accordance with twenty-eight phases of the moon, the light part of the moon in varying degrees being the symbol of the subjective and the dark portion in like manner being that of the objective,—also the Celestial Body, the four faculties which man has made in past and present lives, then the Will, the Creative Genius, the Mask and the Body of Fate, how subjectivity separates man from man, whilst objectivity brings all back to the mass where they began.

Yet despite wheels within wheels, complexity following

complexity, the building up of the whole system of primary and antithetical amounts to a wonderful mechanism no part of which appears to be out of place.[1]

In this geometrical symbolism he has employed Phase No. 1 the moonlight night as that of complete objectivity; it is the phase before the first crescent appears, and therefore all is dark. Within it human entities become instruments of supernatural manifestation, and they transact any purpose imposed upon them. According to psychical investigations these have temporary bodies composed of an organized plastic material drawn from living bodies, and are thus enabled to manifest themselves to us as they appeared when in the flesh. These shapes are dominated by an intelligence in the same manner as our bodily organisms are ruled by our minds, and their activities display both will and intention similar to living beings.

> When all the dough has been so kneaded up
> That it can take what form cook Nature fancies,
> The first thin crescent is wheeled round once more.

I heard W. B. Yeats once declare that such etheric, or I should say ectoplasmic bodies,[2] are composed of what he termed "plastic dough," and that all knowledge becomes instinct and faculty. I have also been informed that many rich and worldly minded people who have "passed over" prefer to remain in a sort of counterpart of their earthly life when they go through the same routine of luxurious living rather than progress in higher planes of being. Or else as he wrote of Thoor Ballylee:

> for centuries,
> Rough men-at-arms, cross-gartered to the knees
> Or shod in iron, climbed the narrow stairs,
> And certain men-at-arms they were
> Whose images, in the Great Memory stored
> Came with loud cry and panting breast
> To break upon a sleeper's rest
> While their great wooden dice beat on the board.

[1] The Poet I fancy discovered his geometrical symbolism, as in his early use of symbols when writing poetry, had an aesthetic aspect like Silvester, the mathematician, who saw all the colours of the rainbow in a page of algebra.

[2] The late Dr. Crawford, of Belfast University, showed me and some others, photographs of ectoplasmic rods taken by the glow from oxysulphide of calcium, being invisible in any specific, or ordinary light.

Phase 15, the full moon, is what he calls the phase of complete subjectivity, which is a phase of entire beauty, and where every beloved image has bodily form, and every bodily form is loved. This love being the highest attainment of the intellect and has nothing of desire implies effort, and although there is still separation from the loved object, love accepts the separation as necessary to its own existence. This is then the "Land of Heart's Desire"

> "Where beauty has no ebb, decay, no flood,
> But joy is wisdom, Time an endless song."

He states in *A Vision* that as we approach Phase 15, personal beauty increases, and at Phase 14 and Phase 16 the greatest human beauty becomes possible, and he thus wrote of womanly beauty:

> "O cloud-pale eyelids, dream-dimmed eyes
> The poets labouring all their days
> To build a perfect beauty in rhyme
> Are overthrown by a woman's gaze
> And by the unlabouring brood of the skies:
> And therefore my heart will bow, when dew
> Is dropping sleep, until God burn time,
> Before the unlabouring stars and you."

and

> "A woman's beauty is like a white
> Frail bird, like a white sea-bird alone
> At daybreak after stormy night. * * *
> How many centuries spent
> The sedentary soul
> In toils of measurement
> Beyond eagle and mole,
> Beyond hearing or seeing,
> Or Archimedes guess,
> To raise into being
> That loveliness."

In a note to his play *The Only Jealousy of Emir*, he says:

"Objective natures are destined to be always ugly, hence the disagreeable appearance of politicians, reformers, philanthropists, scientists," and to which might be added financiers, usurers, company promoters, pugilists, and so on.

The Rose is symbol of spiritual love as well as supreme beauty, also intellectual beauty, and was once regarded as a symbol of the sun. Thus the Poet dreams as did Dante of

Beatrice, or like Rudel the troubadour who set out upon a pilgrimage to gaze at last upon the beauty of the Lady of Tripoli,[1] which the singers of Provence had exalted in heavenly music, and who he had never seen. Yeats wrote of another of equal beauty, thus :

" And him who sold tillage and house and goods,
And sought through lands and islands numberless years
Until he found with laughter and with tears
A woman of so shining loveliness
That men threshed corn at midnight by a tress,
A little stolen tress."

Being does not fade in passing on to other states of existence, but the shade is said to fade out at last. The shade appears to correspond to the psychic factor, but the Celestial Body which is spiritual attains a spiritual state between earthly lives of which the surroundings as well as the aptitudes of early earthly lives are experienced and displayed :

" He grows younger every second
That were all his birthdays reckoned,
Much too solemn seemed
Because of what he had dreamed,
On the ambition that he served
Much too solemn and reserved.
Jaunting, journeying
In his own dayspring. * * *
At some old whitethorn root
He'll practise the shepherd's flute,
Or on the close-cropped grass
Court his shepherd lass."

and so on back to years of infancy.

He names this " dreaming back," which can also have very unpleasant associations, and quotes from a modern poem about " a beloved ghost," whom another poet saw reflected in a looking-glass, and thinking herself unobserved was powdering her face in order to save her beauty from decay. Years ago I was told by a student of the occult, that in one or other of the earth's encircling planes, which is constituted of that protyle substance out of

[1] Both Swinburne and Browning here made this incident a subject for their poetry.

which all material elements and forms in course of ages had granulated, and thus formed atoms, there is a region he named " Vanity Fair " where, as he explained it to me, feminine leaders of fashion, and their followers, can set off their charms in the most magnificent and becoming apparel,[1] as well as adorn their perfect and immaculate forms with precious stones of splendour and brilliance beyond human conception. But there is a very unhappy " snag " connected with that supersensory world, and that is on account of there being no personalities present to admire, or what may be still worse any of those entities they come into contact with turn out to be hopelessly indifferent to any allurements, as there are far more important issues at stake.

I must confess that this revelation aroused within me a sense of humour, for being a callous male I failed to realize such a dreadful prospect. Probably he attributed my sudden risibility to honest doubt, and he was not far wrong.

This nevertheless may be a much exaggerated instance of what W. B. Yeats puts forward in explaining how memories of events which took place during a previous life upon earth come in the form of dreams to the daimon, that is the ultimate self, and he holds that those events, or combinations of circumstances during life, had been shaped as it were by intuitive recollections, yet unknown to the ego, of circumstances that had surrounded it whilst inhabiting the flesh when living upon earth, perhaps centuries previously.

That former existence may have been a short and a merry one when amidst splendour and luxury in the zenith of their beauty, or else one or other may have grown old, and still lives in her youth once more :

> Pendant in passion, learned in old courtesies,
> Vehement and witty she had seemed to glide
> To some intrigue in her red shoes,
> Her domino, her panniered skirt copied from Loughi,
> The meditative critic.

[1] These clothes are illusionary, but the force exercised to produce such an illusion is a mystery. It is said that in the psychic world illusionary garments are always to be obtained by the act of willing, for purposes of identification.

And of her he might also have written as he did upon the lady of old distinguished grace when she was dying :

> When her soul flies to the predestined dancing-place
> . . . . . let her come face to face,
> Amid the first astonishment, with Grania's shade
> All but the terrors of the woodland flight forgot
> That made her Dermuid dear, and some old cardinal
> Pacing with half-closed eyelids in a sunny spot
> Who had murmured of Giorgione at his latest breath—
> Aye and Achilles, Simor, Babar, Barham all
> Who have lived in joy and laughed into the face of death.

and besides those beauties of old-time who had ever joyed in the dance, where those fair daughters of dreams and of stories who in the Poet's imagination had charmed with their vivacity and lustrous eyes, kings, courtiers and warriors amidst the long Celtic twilight, with dim shadowy queens upon their jewelled thrones, such as the golden Maeve, " divine to many thousand eyes " and

> She could have called over the rim of the world
> Whatever woman's lovers had hit her fancy,

and like other queens, who were counselled by Danaan gods from glittering realms of faery, and those phantoms from the past as he wrote " cleave the waters of sleep, and come to us from Eden on flying feet," such as Deirdre the Celtic conception of fair womanhood, Etain who was crazed by love for Baile, Niamh " with love-lorn face," the Aphrodite of Irish myth, Grania beloved of Diamuid, and others.

And there were those fair women too, with creative poetic minds to whom came dreams wherewith to beautify the world, and they between birth and death had, as did Sappho and others, vied with any man, and their spontaneous utterances telling of strange and beautiful things were oftentimes sad-voiced and sweet, for what their waking souls imagined were pre-natal memories of noble characters and wonder deeds of goodness, they having found these realities in some bygone historic era, which had flashed through their minds during unexpected moments of exaltation.

[1] Pronounced Grawnia.

Beauty in womanhood was to him in his early days that quality as having reached the highest pinacle of excellence, and he made it a mystical acquisition to his many excursions amidst the realms of faerydom where the spirit of his poetry in glowing phrases revealed to the mind a magical world, when he had changed many sad olden stories to burdens of song, and made tender or tragic semi-material images seem as if they had arisen from the borderland of dreams.

Thus his imagination bore him far away back into that far remote past when Helen herself had lived, and "in her sight was Elysium, her smile was heaven; her voice was enchantment," and he wrote of her who was the World's Desire, "that she of all other women was the most touching in her romantic beauty" when amidst those perilous early years a sound continually rang in her ears of armed men, with

> The broken wall, the burning roof and tower
> And Agamemnon dead.

In her succeeding phase, the next turn of the wheel, she still possesses her ancient beauty, yet wanders alone, still her past languorous movements have changed to power and responsibility, and her whole life becomes an image of unified energy in its antithesis to when it had been made noble by irresponsible simplicity, and who spoke of Hector in tears, "grief-ful Helen[1] has no friend now that thou art gone."

> Why should I blame her that she filled my days
> With misery, or that she would of late
> Have taught to ignorant men most violent ways,
> Or hurled the little streets upon the great,
> Had they but courage equal to desire?
> What could have made her peaceful with a mind
> That nobleness made simple as a fire,
> With beauty like a tightened bow, a kind
> That is not natural in an age like this,
> Being high and solitary and most stern?
> Why, what could she have done being what she is?
> Was there another Troy for her to burn?

[1] According to Herodotus Helen, after she had left her husband King Menelaus, did not reach Troy with Paris as their ship was driven ashore on the Egyptian coast, where King Proteus detained the real Helen, and it was only a phantom of that old world beauty was carried off to Troy, and the real Helen was discovered by her husband and taken back with him after the Trojan war.

Was it she who by her beauty gathered great crowds from the slums, and spoke of " Mother Ireland with a crown of stars above her head ? "

My memory travels back to the evening when I listened to W. B. Yeats deliver a lecture before the Theosophical Society in Dublin on " The Phases of the Moon," which was valuable to me insomuch that it gave me a key to what otherwise might have proved to be a far more difficult undertaking. He opened a packet and took out a chart of the moon in its varied phases, as applied to his philosophy of metempsychosis, which was in a slightly damaged condition and he apologized for its having been torn, and began by saying, " My Persian," and while he paused for a second or two, I visualized a Persian attendant in oriental costume, but when he mentioned claws, not finger nails, from which he had rescued it only barely in time I awoke to the fact that it was his pet Persian cat had torn it, and which animal figures in one of his prose writings. I remember how his wife was as well conversant as himself with all the intricacies of this almost uncanny philosophy, and she once set him right where he had made a slip.

He spoke of his " instructors " as if they were real living people; he called them "my friends," and mentioned as well how he had in mind to issue an edition of a book upon the subject with illustrations engraved on wood by using the graving tools that had been handled by Albrecht Dürer.

There is one strange detail in particular in *A Vision* where the author draws attention in a footnote to William Blake's poem *The Mental Traveller*, which no commentator has been able to explain satisfactorily, and yet after a careful study of that portion of *A Vision* he calls " The Completed Symbol," one certainly obtains not only an inkling, but a perception of the poem's extraordinary symbolism, and assuming that the concepts are purely the result of intensified imagination, is it not very peculiar that one form of cryptic philosophy should provide as it were a key to another of equal complexity, and furthermore that the two individuals should have lived in different centuries ?

It would indeed take a separate article in order to go deeply into their correlation.

What led up to the writing of the book was no doubt W. B. Yeats's study of mysticism in his youth, and he also studied and dabbled in magic, but nothing bordering on the Black Art, or Satanism.

It was a mysticism entirely his own which I have endeavoured to fathom, having read his *Rosa Alchemica* containing what Æ called the images of phantasy. His study of alchemy[1] was not, I take it, what is popularly known by that word, that is changing the baser metals into gold, but philosophically speaking, what is in all bodies known as the " prima materia " a spiritual principle, and an infusion of this immaterial substance into natural things, and which when tinctured, would change bodies into souls, and weariness into ecstasy; the doctrine being that all human beings without being aware of the fact are weary, and he longed for some power, an essence, that would bring about a dissolution of all mortal things.[2] Tinctures from this point of view occur very frequently in his philosophic scheme set out in *A Vision.*

There is an interesting point I must draw attention to, and that is in later Brahman theology a tendency was displayed to connect the souls of the departed with the waning and waxing of the moon, and in one of the Upanishads it is stated that all who leave the world go directly to the moon, and which we must regard as the moon at the fall, and how by their lives its waxing crescent is increased, and by its waning it brings them to second birth; and it was a doctrine of the Manichæan sect, third century A.D., that the souls of men rise after death from the twelve

[1] According to legend the fallen angels "who saw the daughters of men that they were fair, and took them wives of all that they chose," taught the laws of alchemy to those women they married, these instructions being recorded in a book called *Chema.* The text from the Book of Genesis gave Byron the foundation for his dramatic poem *Heaven and Earth.*

[2] In one of his books W. B. Yeats draws an analogy between the arts and the labour of the alchemists, each being an attempt to condense out of " the flying vapour of the world an image of human perfection for its own and not for art's sake," and the Alchemists were called artists in their day. Also that " we live with images, that is our renunciation, for only the silent sage or saint can make himself nto that perfection."

signs of the Zodiac in symbols of light, one of the two principles, viz. light and darkness ; and the sun and moon were likened to ships, the moon the smaller ship carried the burden of souls for fifteen days and the sun the larger for fifteen days, making the twenty-eight crescents the full moon and the moon during complete occultation. According to the ancient doctrines soul and body are united, but the compact is unequally binding upon either one or the other, for the soul by its own nature aspires to freedom, but the body even " when an immortal passion breathes in mortal clay " holds it in fetters whilst " our hearts endure the scourge," and it is only death that can dissolve the partnership. But alas ! for those who eternal freedom is the heart's desire, and even " when the flaming lute-thronged angelic door is wide " that compact must again be renewed, and it may be only after a short while, or perhaps a thousand years.

Plato wrote of the souls having to pass out of the underworld, after a long and tedious journey from a gap in the earth, or cave, and others from the heaven-world who described enjoyments and sights of marvellous beauty. All save those unfortunate souls who were condemned to Tartarus had the selection of what they would become during the next unity of soul with body and thus the wheel of birth continues to revolve alternating between a post-mortem existence and a fresh reincarnation round the wide circle of necessity.

In Virgil's Aeneid Book VI there is an episode on the same theme where in a fourth dimensional space or locality, heroes who had died in the Trojan war exist simultaneously with kings and consuls of ancient Rome, and all are awaiting the time when they will reach the borders of day, and pass back through the Ivory Gate, or the Gate of Horn, to where deep in the forest are the waters of Lethe, or forgetfulness.

The belief in metempsychosis was held by the Chaldeans whose history extends so far back as to be lost in the mists of antiquity, and Egypt, which has been called " the timeless ", took this doctrine from anterior civilizations.

It was also a doctrine held by the Celts, whose conceptions

of the three worlds, according to W. B. Yeats, are supposed to have given Dante the plan of the *Divina Commedia*; he himself has written concerning an Irish mythical hero:

> I have drunk ale from the Country of the Young
> And weep because I know all things now:
> I have been a hazel tree and they hung
> The Pilot Star and the Crooked Plough
> Among my leaves in times out of mind:
> I became a rush that horses tread:
> I became a man, a hater of the wind,
> Knowing one, out of all things, alone, that his head
> Would not lie on the breast or his lips on the hair
> Of the woman that he loves, until he dies:
> Although the rushes and the fowl of the air
> Cry of his love with their pitiful cries.

Aengus Master of Love would not grant him this boon until his next life upon Earth.

When lecturing on the Great Wheel, W. B. Yeats introduced an additional hypothesis to which he refers in his book, and that is based upon the conception that some souls would drop behind or some run ahead, which may shorten or lengthen the whole in succeeding circles and so on and on as each circle becomes smaller so that the entire system becomes a cone or spiral and in the course of thousands of years the circle becomes that of one individual forming an apex; and then he went still further by stating that it would restart, that is to say, wheels or gyres increasing in size from point of contact so as to form an inverted cone point to point, and when the great circle is again reached the system begins all over again. I will not enter however into any further prolixities.

He describes the manner by which the so-called communications came to his wife, he would ask them various questions, and she in automatic writing would set down the answers on paper.

The unknown communicator at first took his theme from W. B. Yeats's essay called *Per Amica Silentia Lunae* where the author draws a distinction between the perfection that is from a man's combat with himself, and that which is

a combat with circumstances, and the communicators built up an elaborate classification of men according to their more or less complete expression of one type or another, that is man's combat with himself, the subjective, and the other his combat with circumstances, the objective, and that hypothetic entity supported the classification with a series of symbolisms unknown to his wife, and himself. I need not go into further details, except one interesting point, and that is she would at times talk in her sleep and upon receiving a signal he would write down whatever she said, or replies to his questions, and in this manner the work was completed; also that the communicators (*sic*) had drawn up their symbolic map of European history some days before the publication of the first German edition of *Decline of the West*, which I had the good fortune to come across in a public library about two years and a half ago, and which, although it is as Yeats wrote, "founded upon a different philosophy" gives the same years of crisis, and draws the same general conclusions.

After hearing Yeats deliver his lecture on the Phases of the moon I reread his poem under the same title, and found it to be quite intelligible, but what flashed through my mind upon hearing its explanation was the thought,—and the same idea occurred to George W. Russell (Æ)—that it displayed a tendency towards the horrible doctrine of predestination, and he wrote that it is always possible for a man to rise above his stars, and I believe, as he did, in Free Will.

The whole conception of *A Vision*, as its title denotes, is dreamlike, indeed some people might call it a nightmare procession of beings born into this world in order to carry out a predestined purpose, possibly being the result of whatever had been done, or left undone, during a former existence,[1] also predestined, and thus back and back;

[1] Aldous Huxley considers that the Indian notion of Karma, the Buddhist conception of the quality of actions, that is the law of cause and effect as applied to the doctrine of reincarnation, helps us to explain the existence of the many cases of what we consider undeserved suffering. Poets have made the doctrine of reincarnation a subject for poetry, particularly G. D. Rossetti, W. E. Henley, Andrew Lang, and the present Poet Laureate, whose poem *A Creed* was inspired by the notion of Karmic law. Upon several occasions I have heard Æ how he could remember prenatal events, which may have been his own imagination. He declared that those memories of the past were attained by his system of concentration.

whilst on the other hand progression is both acted upon and predestined; and what is eventually in store does not by any means appear inviting, even when the phase of complete objectivity is reached.[1]

This phase appears to me like the dreaming back to an age of innocence, for hunchback, saint and fool are the last crescents, they having no active intelligence, so that they obey obscure subconscious fantasies, while at their best they would know all wisdom if they could know anything, and so on. He had written elsewhere that there is a certain wisdom which the fool has acquired from supernatural sources, that he knows all things but is afraid to repeat what is known to himself, for if he did that power would be taken away.

In his play *The Hour Glass*, the Poet has made the fool wiser than the wise man, for the fool has intuitive knowledge given him by the Angel.

Typical of each phase of the lunar revolution, in order to illustrate such a correlation with a phase of human life he gives examples of men and women both living and dead, and in this wise several personalities are grouped together in a single phase, and that does not strike one as successful in many instances.

Personally I have not taken the trouble even to guess at which of the grooves of the Great Wheel I am in at present, although it might be interesting to know, and I think the same would apply to most people; but in whose company we shall next find ourselves would be still more interesting to discover.

If I take for my present life at random say Phase 17 as my creative mind is subjective truth, as I am when writing articles or reviews most particular in regard to facts, then in the next phase I shall be in company with Goethe and Matthew Arnold whose works I have always appreciated, especially Goethe; but I will have to wait for a very long period to elapse before I am once again in the same company with my late friend Æ; but meanwhile

[1] I remember a lady who was present inquired of the Poet which Phase he was in during his present term on Earth, and he pointed to the chart without any hesitation, and as well as I can remember it was either Phase 24 or 25.

I shall have the consolation of meeting Bernard Shaw, Shakespeare, Flaubert, Synge and probably Queen Victoria. I repeat that this whole conception is nothing more than a dream, for he is a poet of dreams. "The Shadowy Waters" was the outcome of a dream, and so was "Cathleen ni Hoolihan," as well as many of his poems, especially *The Cap and Bells*.

A critic has thus written "at his best, Mr. Yeats has a command of sweet somnambulistic language unequalled by any writer in our generation.

> "But I being poor have only my dreams;
> I have spread my dreams under your feet;
> Tread softly because you tread on my dreams."

Samuel Butler in *Erewhon* showed that individuals are wrapped in transparent veils which, if torn off, would display their voluntary illusions, and Bernard Shaw has done the same thing in his plays. The antithetical phase such as the Creative Mind and Body of Fate enforced emotion, enforced intellectual action, and so on, is illustrative of this in *A Vision*.

A Vision, notwithstanding its many complexities, is without a doubt an amazing book, and anybody who takes the trouble to devote a little time to its study will be amply rewarded. The two chapters named "The Great Year of the Ancients" and "Dove and Swan" are richly strewn with his historic affirmations and astrological lore, and written in his most engaging style, being quite dissimilar to the more or less characteristic manner he had previously adopted in his many prose works, but none the less attractive; for his entire conception, mental or extraneous, of the Great Wheel of History, where salient incidents as well as prominent characters, are taken in periodic succession over a couple of millenniums[1] in accordance with astrological reckonings, is altogether an undoubtedly marvellous achievement.

This then is the Poet's dream concept of the immortal part of man, that Divine emanation which in far remote æons

[1] Twelve such wheels or gyres constitute a single great year or cone of twenty-six thousand years.

first had entered the initial circle of transmigration including this world, where it had time after time undergone unlimited trials, endless struggles, and before it lay the great hope of final atonement.[1]

In the Earth-world the ancient religions including that of dogmatic Christianity, located their hells, although in the early Christian Church their material fires were taught as symbolical of the torments of conscience ; but it was during the dark ages of ignorance, cruelty and superstition that such horrors became a fixed tenet, the outcome of perverted imagination born out of fear of warring devils where in many instances death of the body was concerned. It was William Blake, the mystic, who wrote :

> " Why should Punishment weave the veil with Iron Wheels of war
> When Forgiveness might weave it with Wings of Cherubim."

W. B. Yeats too had cooler judgment :

> " The heavy boughs, the burnished dove
> That moans and sighs a hundred days :
> How when we die our shades may rove,
> When eve has hushed the feathered ways,
> With vapoury footsale among the water's drowsy blaze,"

and of their terrible warnings which men of old believed had come to them from the dead in dreams :

> " Have not old writers said
> That dizzy dreams can spring
> From the dry bones of the dead ?
> And many a night it seems
> That all the valley fills
> With those fantastic dreams.
> That overflow the hills,
> So passionate is a shade."

At the end of the book there is a poem,—there are only about four altogether,—he has named " All Souls' Night,"

[1] Origen, one of the early Christian Fathers, who had studied Plato and Pythagoras, gave offence because he believed in the pre-existence of the soul, final restoration and the plurality of worlds. I have always been interested in this Pythagorean doctrine, and I first read of it in one of Dumas' novels when a boy. Its principal character was that arch-charlatan who called himself Cagliostro, and who was said to have been beloved by the ladies, being reported to have discovered a mixture that would make ugly women beautiful. He is the guest of a nobleman, and in the course of conversation tells his host how a certain general was killed in a famous battle, and on being asked how he got the information he replied " I was that general," or something to that effect.

which is beautiful in many respects, and there is one stanza where he refers to a lady who before her death had taught native children at a school in some foreign land, and this refers to the same philosophy :

" Before that end much had she ravelled out
From a discourse in figurative speech
By some learned Indian.
On the soul's journey. How it is wheeled about
Wherever the orbit of the moon can reach,
Until it plunge into the sun.
And there, free and yet fast,
Being both Chance and Choice,
Forget its broken toys
And sink into its own delight at last.

H. T. HUNT GRUBB.

NOT MINE

THESE are not my words, not mine
These strange but fertile symbols
That hold the lustre of red wine
Poured into silver thimbles.

Prayer can not pull them from the skies
Like Pentecostal fire ;
They are the esoteric prize
The envied few acquire.

They are the lightning of the Lord
Struck in a stagnant fen,
Come with the swiftness of a sword
And keener than a pen.

These are not mine ; mine are not strange
Bred of a neophyte,
Nor have they potency to change
A dark dream into light.

Breathless and swift and sure they make
Their visitations plain,
Piercing the soul's profound opaque—
Soaring, while mine remain.

PAUL H. OEHSER.

TO A LEAF

I THOUGHT you were unwise, and overbold,
Out from the clasping of your bud's strong grasp
To struggle and unfold,
A miracle of tenderness and fire,
Of inexperience, and quick desire,
Into a world so cold.

I saw you lie a fleck of listless gold
On the dank lap of unregretful earth,
Fallen, and still, and old,
With yet a beauty that the poet sings
Shaping the poignancy of earthly things
With his renewing mould ;

I had forgot that constant sacrifice
Where through you build the ancient mother's might,
Iron, earth-gripped, storm-bold,
Hiding her starkness with your emerald tress,
To throb the heart of summer, and to bless
Lowland, and dale, and wold :

And then I knew you held an inward sense
I might but guess, and hourly wonder at,
Joyous and selfless free,
Yielding your revelation to my heart,
Feeding my being from your nature's art,
Of form and alchemy.

DAVID FRIDLANDER

DORIS MAJOR APOSTROPHIZES KEATS' HOUSE :

And did you dwell within these walls,
O lyric master,
And did you sit where still light gleams
Through frosted windows,
Ice-like blue,
Long chin on hand and god-like brow
Low bending over
Poet page,
Communing with Spenserian band
Like wing-furled angel
Pent in cage ? . . . . . .
How strange it sounds in these most cold, mechanic days !

VOI CHE INTENDENDO . . .

AT the present time there is a certain obsession dominating literature—the idea that Poetry, if it is to be worth considering at all, must reflect the Spirit of the Age (we capitalize this grandiose phrase in token of reverence); that it should hold up the mirror not to nature, but to man's achievement and splendour. For that his achievement is splendid man never doubts at all.

A very cursory glance at the poetry which has survived the test of time in our own and in other countries should be sufficient to dispel this illusion. It is the glory of our chief poet that he was not of his age but for all time; and such names as Spenser, Herbert, Herrick, Donne, Keats stand out immediately as writers from whose poetry no inkling at all could ever be gathered as to the particular problems which in politics and science alike were as insistent in their age as ours are to-day.

There is a certain sense in which the very great poet will inevitably serve as a mirror of his times: Chaucer does reflect the whole spirit of mediaeval England, as Shakespeare sums up in himself the expansiveness which we call Elizabethan; and the providing of a tapestry in which thirteenth century Italy is minutely and accurately depicted is merely one of the many facets of Dante's immortal genius. But this aspect of a great poet's work comes, I think, unconsciously, not from conscious effort on his part. Dante intended to paint the immortal world; that he included the mortal as well in its entirety is simply the inevitable result of the all-embracing scope of his genius, no more remarkable than that the whole includes the part.

All this is not to say that there is any theme or subject which may rightly be called foreign to poetry. But that the poet who limits his field must also limit his scope; and that he is at least as likely to find the deep sources of inspiration still untapped in Nature and in his own heart and spiritual life, as in the consideration of contemporary triumphs in mechanical engineering; or the study—by no means peculiar to our age—of the relations between rich and poor and the problems of government which those

relations present,—that indeed the depth of his insight into the latter may be conditioned by the depth of his experience in the former.

The reason for the present popular eclipse of poetry may well be in the fact that the names most advertised at the moment are the names of those who take the more transitory view, and that for this men derive from them no deep and enduring satisfaction of their spiritual needs, no lyric beauty to set against the material impact of the external world, which is always with us, nor needs exhibition in poetry.

Our hope is in the less advertised names which still believe in poetry as song and are patiently at work producing it; as seen for example in the work of poets like E. H. W. Meyerstein and John Gawsworth, who have recently published collections of verse in which the true lyrical impulse is strong and vivid.

Mr. Meyerstein's latest volume, *A Boy of Clare* (Oxford University Press, 3s. 6d.) is an example of the lyrical type of poetry which owes a good deal to external nature, and something to the human heart. It challenges and will inevitably receive comparison with *The Shropshire Lad*; its rhythms are similar, it looks at life from an angle of equal incidence, it is localized in an English county. At least one critic who should know better has already referred to it as a Suffolk Lad. The comparison, however, is neither valuable nor valid; for there is one very real distinction which at once sets the two books apart. It is this: that Housman was primarily concerned with the lad, who might almost as well have been in Yorkshire or Cornwall for all we learn about Shropshire; whereas Mr. Meyerstein's real concern is with the county. His lad is a very light sketch; but we do learn from these poems a great deal about Suffolk, or rather that particular portion of it which Stour borders in the south from Clare down to Sudbury; which the poet loves, and of which he has ably painted the form and nobly interpreted the spirit. I think if this book has ultimate value it is as a record of the quietness and depth of the English country-side; of

something which is passing all too rapidly—such vivid and unforgettable pictures, for instance, as that of the Stour :

Least arrogant of wardens,
You lap with tireless care
The gently-sloping gardens,
The Priory bowers of Clare.

Your poplars and your osiers,
Your elders' rustling surf,
Your sylvan fox-glove croziers,
Your ramparts of lush turf,

Your bridges and their shadows,
The singers in your brakes,
The cattle on your meadows,
Your pied unharmful snakes !

That passage seems to sum the book's virtues—clear-cut precision of phrase, imagery that is both vivid and exact, and above all lyrical flow, a true nature of song. The occasional defects in the book seem to arise from too stringent compression, and a certain lack of what I would call critical humour, resulting in such infelicities as,

Sour faces of girls' mothers
Scowling their Sabbath Ought—

or,

With life no lover's reconciled,
Till the despised's grown dearer.

It is not so easy to select from the numerous lovely things in the book. No. XXVII is a fair sample :

From Kedington to Wixoe
Is three miles, says the post ;
But ah ! that finger tricks so ;
You feel the first mile most.

And when a stiff wind's blowing
You feel it most of all,
Despite hedge-parsley snowing,
Without one flake let fall,

and as a proof that there are deeper things in these poems than county topography, the probing severity of :

All griefs in loving sum to this:
Just to discover, while we thought
We gave, we only craved, the kiss;
It's that brings young men's pride to nought.

And what shall heal a young man's pride
Cast down from its Icarian poise?
Only the pang in brain and side
That dulls the edge of later joys,

and the deadly distilled pain of No. XLII:

What does she dream? Of him?
My cup's full to the brim.

What does he dream? Of her?
They both lie stark, nor stir.

They do not dream, they sleep;
Cling to that, heart, and weep.

To pass from this book to Mr. John Gawsworth's *Poems* (The Richards Press, 2s. 6d.) is to pass from the court of Oberon to that of Elizabeth; from the domain of Spenser to that of Sir Philip Sidney. I am not sure of Mr. Meyerstein's star, though I believe his deity to be Pan; but I am confident that Mr. Gawsworth's star and god is Mercury. The mark of Mr. Gawsworth's poetry is delicacy and precision. This small volume is the recension of seven years' work, and conveys a sense of care and infinite polish; of twenty poems having been rejected for every one kept; of a world of careful thought expended to get exactly the right epithet, the perfect chime of sound. In a poet whose inspiration was less real, such extreme care might result in stunted growth, if not in actual sterility. The over-cultivated plant loses vigour.

The effect here is rather a transmutation of coal to diamond; and though the flame of the former may have more life and power, the lustre and brilliance of the latter have real and prized worth, a high value in a small space.

This diamond quality, hard and lustrous, is exhibited in most of these poems; very clearly in one of the most beautiful in the collection, "Winter Pain":

O Bright was Winter on the branch
One morning early,
When holly tried its blood to stanch
With spiked leaf pearly!
I saw its little berry-wounds:
I saw them clearly—
And sudden knew Life's soldier rounds,
Come cruel, yearly.

There is no great depth here, but the utmost precision of cutting and polish: all the light it receives is refracted with an added beauty, and with the utmost possible economy of means.

In these poems passion itself is refined to this same rarity and becomes cold, a blaze of fire without warmth, as in the terse and vivid lines of "The Mill":

Turville Mill is broken,
The fabric starkly rent;
Yet stands it to betoken
Decay's slow argument.

In wind-blown dereliction
The shaking antic spars
Creak their last malediction,
Against the eternal stars.

This poet's natural love of form leads him inevitably to the sonnet of which there are several notable examples in this collection. In one of the best I found a line about the sun, "The ice-plumed pine with dripping fire adorning," in which it seems to me the poet has himself summed up his own work.

So long as we have these and other poets not unmindful of the lyre, we may believe that Time will still winnow something imperishable out of this age of noise and speed.

T. WESTON RAMSEY.

The Songs of Prison is a volume of poetry in modern Greek issued at Paphos (Edit. de luxe 1936, Second Ed. 1937) written by (Mr.) Ch. Aristotelis Galatopoulos, formerly M.P. for Cyprus, within the walls of his prison from 1931–1936. The poet took part in the national rising of the Hellenism of Cyprus in October 1931. His work was reviewed by the Athenian and Continental Press and especially with much praise by the President of the French Academy, in the *Mercure de France*, February 1936, and in the *Stimmen Aus Dem Sud Osten*, issued at Munich, in October, 1936.

THEN

WHEN trees to me are only trees,
Not gods who lift green arms on high,
When stars are but accessories
Of an accepted sky;

When summer winds hold only dust,
When cabbages are neither crude
Nor beautiful, and Beauty just
An abstract platitude;

When Spring is just another Spring,
When moons are merely moons to me,
When nightingales can only sing
In dumb discordancy;

When little boys are little boys,
Not cheeky, grubby cherubim,
When sound of any sort is noise,
And light just bright or dim;

When love seems but a shallow thing,
When there's no meaning in romance,
When even songs that angels sing
Have no significance;

When streams are water, and, to me,
The reddest rose is only red—
In that grim hour of sanity
I'll know that I am dead.

B. MYFANWY HAYCOCK.

THE TEREBINTH

O LONELY tree,
solitary tree,
What is thy story
Art thou free
To shun thy fellows?
Answer me.

Yea, desolate,
Since 'neath my shade
Despair once flung
Of silver pieces ten times three
And on my boughs as gallows tree,
A traitor hung.

MARY WINTER WERE.

DYNAMICS OF AMERICAN POETRY: LXXI

BARBARA YOUNG is a poet of absolute sincerity and steadfast idealism, whom no calamity in her own circle or in the wider circle of the world can shake from her belief in Beauty and the increasing power of Righteousness.

Miss Young has been called something of a mystic but I would not burden her with such an ambiguous term. Hers is a splendid spirit, romantic and undaunted, and she has written numbers of beautiful poems expressing her inspiring convictions.

Two books are now followed by a third, *No Beauty in Battle* (The Paebar Co., New York), and this book gives us many graphic lines denouncing the outrages of war. Here, poets, is a subject worth your breaking your lances on, if you can aid in outlawing war by the vigour of your protest! Barbara Young affirms ("That We Have Cherished"):

> Nothing is ever lost of loveliness we once have known;
> Nothing of splendour passes into the thick dark of oblivion.
> No gracious word, no hour of stark white beauty
> Shall ever fall away into the measureless pit
> Of unremembered things.

And in her "Credo" she urges: "For beauty's sake alone let us do this—for beauty's sake alone."

In a sonnet sequence, inscribed to Beauty and dedicated to John Masefield before his appointment as Laureate, Miss Young further dwells on the high call of Beauty—on its exactions and rewards: we give the fourth sonnet:

> Yet still I wait. I call and listen still,
> Knowing the hoarse mad laughter of the world
> Is but the grinding of a mortal mill,
> The sound of cattle-corn, ear-husked and hurled
> To shallow bins that cry a hollow sound
> Like a lost curlew in a world of fog;
> Knowing the feet that tease the temperate ground
> Dance to the baying of a winded dog.
>
> And this I know: I shall go hence at last,
> Whither I do not know, I do not care;
> Only the earthly clamor will be past,
> And Beauty's voice will thread the exultant air,
> While this freed spirit like a deathless bird
> Shall trail the eternal singing of her word.

Of Mr. Masefield, Barbara Young writes:

> Because he craved the wisdom of the road,
> And the wild hill that underlay the sky;
> Because he sought the field no man has mowed,
> And the dark crag where none but eagles cry;

Because the rigid roof and wall and door
Stifled his heart and overthrew his breath,
Denied the thorny cup he thirsted for
And dealt him cakes as stale as musty death;
Because no man might bind him to a wage,
No woman tame him to a bed and board,
He turned from them and quit their tinseled cage,
And the barred wicket where the seeds were stored.

Well, old books tell how proud men, wistful-eyed,
Have lived for Beauty, and for Beauty died.

A first book of poems by E. Louise Mally, entitled *Dedications* (Coward-McCann, New York), introduces the reader to a poet born in Dallas, Texas, who received her B.A. from Barnard College, New York, and who is at present doing graduate work at Columbia University in Philosophy and Greek Mythology. Miss Mally sends us an interesting summing-up of her thoughts on poetry in the following paragraph:

"You ask me what I think the place of poetry in modern life may be. Why, exactly what it always has been. Euripides, in ancient Greece, wrote propaganda for peace and the improved condition of women, along with choruses that have been the delight of the most 'ivory tower' of poets. Hesiod wrote a sort of farmer's almanac—the Homeric singers, according to one theory, sang for the princes and nobles of the lands. There is no set of circumstances which is not material for poetry—provided only it be strained through the meshes of emotion, colored with imagery—the natural language of emotion—and set to some sort of music. And just as every poet has his own emotional interests, about which he writes, so every layman may find his own emotional interests heightened and made vivid in some sort of poetry. The place of poetry—as of all arts—is the fulfilment of an emotional and intellectual need in any manner that is valid to the writer and reader. I realize that in saying this I touch upon the question of values and differences of values. That is a question that cannot be answered in one paragraph—or in many paragraphs. Lest I be misunderstood, however, I should like to say that I am very well aware of the factor of value—that I assert a democracy of subject matter and perhaps of form in the realm of poetry—but a rigid hierarchy of result."

A beautiful short lyric from *Dedications* is "Song For Two Voices"—

Hush and be still,
Love is here.
As a host of swords surge over the hill

(Hush and be still)
Love is here.
And all the twilight land
Stills at the touch of her hand
And the calm of her lips and the peace of her brow ;
The strength of her levelled spear.
Hush and be still—hush and be still—
Love is here.

Romantic and full of the thing called poetry is " Valediction ":

I shall remember only—I who kissed you—
Forgetting the clear days, the clean spun days are passed,
I shall remember only your taut beauty,
Like a slim sail strained to a straight, tall mast.

I shall remember only the swift moonlight
And the sail glimmering—not the mast that fell,
Splintering the ocean :—only spindrift
That frets the undredged seas of our farewell.

Miss Mally is happy also in her use of the sonnet form, as attested in a sequence, of which we give the third :

" How do I love you ? " With all ancient pain
Of need for loving—breath and body's praise ;
With dream's desire of moving through mild days
Linked hand by hand—one hand upon the rein
That rules my pliant paces, to constrain
My law to yours, my willing to your ways ;
And equal still—save that your step assays
A swifter mastery of high paths, and gains
Strong sovereignty, thereby. Nay, for myself
I love you best, know—for that gift you bring
Of self-completion, and the garnered pelf
Of your desires which match my goal. You ring
Within my days like the recurrent call
Of a high trumpet in a shadowy hall.

In *Fantasy and Fugue* (Macmillan Co.) Marina Wister writes with much feeling and colour of Mexico, reflecting its charm and mystery. Who that has seen the hardy cactus growing could fail to respond to the first short poem, " Cactus Forest " :

This headless horde, this army
Invades the crowded dusk ;
Twilight thin and balmy
Hints at fang and the tusk.

Like spread hands with lopped fingers
Like lurching gallow-trees
They loom as last light lingers
In threatening calvaries.

A rich and vivid word picture is " Azemmour " :

Where the waste like an eye unlidded gives stare for stare
To the baleful sky, the heavy river pauses ;
Azemmour bleaches above on purple clay,
A city white-hot, of resplendent and challenging
Gaze, that guards the shameful dust of ruin—
While she sears the heart with the haunting line of her towers
Shed tall on the slow drift of the water
Cradling the image of her like a silver fadeless
Untellable dream : as in dream alone she lingers
Who is only a name of sense-enfolding music.

From a sequence of 20 sonnets, " Return To Spring," follows :

Dingy the strident crow about the lawn's
Unshed thin grass worn through to crusted sod.
Stiff is the sluggish earth and drearily yawns,
Curled hard the gummy bud, unburst the pod.
For this I have come ! My fainting haste outreaches
To the house no wavy vine is yet adorning,
Bare through the muted silver of the beeches,
Still half-believed, and like a dream of morning !

Now draw the ache from me, beloved soil—
Soon, soon, be warm, be sweet, and lightly bear
As a blown branch this body sick of toil,
Enfold in your moist grass my fading care.
Sustain me as I were a stump, a stone—
But nourish me. I am indeed your own.

Miss Wister writes a paragraph on poetry for THE POETRY REVIEW :

" What I see, hear, and feel registers its intensity precisely by the desire it creates in me to find appropriate words. The subject of any real poem can only be something that has strongly moved the poet. To this extent, the desire to write is like falling in love, and the ' expressing ' of the subject (really the emotion) is akin to possessing it. The desire to make something that is not there before follows on this. Writing poetry is to me a superior pleasure, though I can never undertake it lightly and dread it as one dreads to explore his conscience. I never know what is going to happen, even when my scheme is clearly charted and I have the key-lines ; hence, the effort is full of excitement and mystery. When it is over, I may feel I have ' made something ' that has a life of its own, and I hope it may touch other lives. I have no gospel, no mission, I do not ' write for the future ' but only to record the reality of my own experience with the world around me."

Beatrice Fenner in *Blue Laughter* brings to mind the close association between music and poetry. Herself a composer of songs that are sung by such distinguished singers as Galli-Curci and Burleigh, she has won an enviable position in the field of music and poetry.

Again we must use the hackneyed phrase, "there is something in this poet's writing that suggests the Orient." Miss Fenner leaves you with a thought that you may develop as you will, as in the first poem from her *Blue Laughter*:—

I stand on the edge of a dusky country
Where shadowy men and women pass,
Not to and fro,
But all in the same direction.
I wonder where they are going.
Perhaps they themselves do not know.
Their heads are bent and they look weary,
But they do not stop to turn,
For they must hurry on before darkness falls.

Perhaps this is only a dream I had of life;
But why am I not one of these shadowy forms?
Why am I the only still thing in this dusky country?

Miss Fenner sends us a paragraph telling us why she writes poetry:

"You ask me why, as a musician, I write poetry. I can only reply that my poems, save those designed for my songs, are no more dependent upon my music than is my music dependent upon them, for, though poetry and music are very closely related, springing, in fact, from the same source, they are, nevertheless, separate entities, with each of its own particular capacities and advantages, capable of expressing certain thoughts and emotions better than the other. Therefore, in writing a poem, I do so irrespective of my music, for, while they may walk hand in hand, they are yet (at least to me) distinctly different answers to my needs."

Louise Bogan belongs to the distinguished list of American poets born in Maine, and has just won for the second time a Guggenheim Fellowship Award: the first was in 1933—and has recently received the Helen Haire Levinson prize for 1937. Miss Bogan is one of the reviewers of *The New Yorker* and she is frequently spoken of as "the accomplished woman poet of the time."

The Sleeping Fury (Charles Scribner's) is Miss Bogan's third book of poems. Her previous volumes were *Body of This Death* and *Dark Summer*.

A splendid sonnet, on the sonnet, we find in this book:

Now, you great stanza, you heroic mould,
Bend to my will, for I must give you love:

The weight in the heart that breathes, but cannot move,
Which to endure flesh only makes so bold.
Take up, take up, as it were lead or gold
The burden; test the dreadful mass thereof. . .
No stone, slate, metal under or above
Earth, is so ponderous, so dull, so cold.
Too long as ocean bed bears up the ocean,
As earth's core bears the earth, have I borne this;
Too long have lovers, bending for their kiss
Felt bitter force cohering without motion.
Staunch meter, great song, it is yours, at length,
To prove how stronger you are than my strength.

Interesting and graphic is " Heard By A Girl ":

Something said: You have nothing to fear
From those long fine bones, and that beautiful ear.
From the mouth, and the eyes set well apart
There's nothing can come which will break your heart.
From the simple voice, the indulgent mind,
No venom breeds to defeat your kind.
And even, it said, those hands are thin
And large, well designed to clasp within
Their fingers (and O what more do you ask?)
The secret and the delicate mask.

Last Flight (Harcourt, Brace and Co.) is a record of Amelia Earhart's final voyages, edited from her notebooks and arranged for by her with her publishers before starting on her last flight. The book includes, at the close of the volume, a poem by Miss Earhart of startling and significant beauty entitled " Courage." The poem is authentic poetry and on writing Mr. George Palmer Putnam, to learn if one might know and have access to any other poems by Miss Earhart, the following letter was received. It seemed incredible there should be but one poem of such value and loveliness:

" Thank you for your pleasant letter of the 3rd. I am so glad that you liked so well A.E.'s little poem ' Courage '. She did write other verses, mostly in her early twenties. Unfortunately the copies of these, which were with her papers, were destroyed in a fire at our home in Rye, New York, some three years ago. She had always intended to ' remember them ' and set them down again. Thus far I have been unable to locate any manuscript."

Courage is the price that life exacts for granting peace.
The soul that knows it not, knows no release
From little things;
Knows not the livid loneliness of fear
Nor mountain heights, where bitter joy can hear
The sound of wings.

How can life grant us boon of living, compensate
For dull gray ugliness and pregnant hate
Unless we dare
The soul's dominion? Each time we make a choice, we pay
With courage to behold a resistless day
And count it fair.

It is not easy to be reasonable about Amelia Earhart, who, in herself, is a poem and whose last prophetic lines written from Lae are so moving. It would seem, like others before her, Miss Earhart had some premonition of what lay ahead. She wrote, as she looked out over the sea: "This broad sea, I shall be glad when we have the hazards of its navigation behind us."

Another Texan presents a first book of poems, *Moon Conjure*, by Sunshine Dickinson Ryman (Tardy Publishing Co., Dallas, Texas), who humorously expresses herself in regard to poetry as follows: "I suppose one reason I write is because I am so much more comfortable after the never-quiet little verselings are outside of my head."

In this collection of over 100 pages, we find a glowing tribute to Miss Millay:

I close your book.
To-day is life too heavy, too beset,
My veins too slow.
My heart like Stephen,
Dies beneath a pile of stones.
Then shut away the aching beauty
Of your words,
Your lines that run like fire
The length of me.
Some other day,
Not now.
How can I take your intolerable load of beauty
On this heart?

A vivid picture in *Moon Conjure*, which gives title to the book, follows:

Straight across the bay to me,
The moon flings a handful of minted gold
That dances on the bright facets of the water
And marks a road, so bright, so alluring,
That I am tempted, like Peter, to try it with my feet.
But here where my silver grass
Is brocaded with black velvet,
In patterns of salt cedar and of fig,
Spellbound, I sit and closely hold my little, sleeping one,

Wrapped in the turned up fullness of my skirt,
And watch and watch, and cannot rise to go,
Until at last the bright road is but a span,
Riding and rippling
Across the broad river in the west,
Riding and rippling and thinning and fading away.

Then the play is ended
And all the world is left,
An empty stage,
In the pale light,
In the misty pall
Of a few, indifferent stars.

From a number of sonnets in this volume, one entitled "People" gives the reader a still clearer insight into the nature of this poet:

If I were called to quit the earth to-night,
Forsaking all that I have loved and known,
It would not be my greatest loss, I own,
To leave these hills that are a pure delight,
To lose the breathless spell of evening glow,
To see no more the blue lake's placid chart.
Such things of living make a lovely part,
Yet I could quite forget them, should I go.

For I have known men loftier than hills,
And women more serene than mountain lake,
Dear human lives so colourful they take
A stronger tone than any sunset spills.
I know that, looking back, I'd turn and grieve
For people, if it were my time to leave.

ALICE HUNT BARTLETT.

A subscriber in Wellington, New Zealand, writes: Personally, as one many miles removed from the centre of your activities, I would like to send word of my thorough appreciation of the work coming through the REVIEWS of your Society. The opening articles are invariably thought-provoking and a great fund of revelation is discovered throughout the pages of the whole publication. It provides an oasis in a desert of material things and one's own efforts seem less isolated.

A Tea and Talk Meeting of the Poet's Fellowship will be held on Saturday, April 30th, 3.30 p.m., when Dr. D. S. Maccoll, Newdigate Prizeman and lately keeper of the Tate Gallery and of the Wallace Collection and author of various volumes of poems, will initiate a discussion.

POETS AND POEMS

WHO does not read and re-read all that is written about Shelley and his " Circle " ? The new biography, *Mary Shelley* (O.U.P., 18s.) is by R. Glynn Grylls (Mrs. Geoffrey Mander, and the wife of one of the oldest Vice-Presidents of The Poetry Society). While containing much familiar material, it also includes new letters of Coleridge, R.L.S. and Hogg, and all is assembled in such a way as to show events from the angle of Mary's life and character. The author writes with the firm conviction that Mary and Shelley were not estranged at the end. Her reflections are those of a philosopher, her references scholarly and well-arranged, but above all her intuitions and understanding are those of a woman in great sympathy with another woman without glossing over her imperfections or over eulogizing her virtues. The book is an addition to an already formidable bibliography of Shelley and his " Circle."

Pope has a large bibliography also, and a new addition, *On The Poetry of Pope* (Milford, Clarendon Press, 7s. 6d.) is by Geoffrey Tillotson. His keynote is the " correctness " of Pope, as shown in Nature, Design, Language, Versification, and Stratification and Variety. Like Miss Sitwell, Mr. Tillotson knows the " texture " of Pope's verse with intimacy and technical appreciation ; like her he allows few flaws in the man or his work. I think if they admitted more they would carry us further in our admiration. But, be that as it may, we acknowledge Mr. Tillotson as a distinguished student of a great poet.

The memoir, *A.E.H.* (Cape, 10s. 6d.), by Laurence Housman, is affectionate, frank, and brotherly in the best sense. In it are included letters to his family and friends, a number of unpublished poems, and some surprising examples of nonsense verse and parodies that were circulated in the family on rare occasions. The technique in versification of A. E. Housman is a bye-word in literature, but his sense of humour was hidden by his self-imposed reserve and general unapproachableness, though it lay obviously beneath the shrewd satire of his remarks. Technical perfection and humour make ideal nonsense verse, for the best joke can be spoiled by clumsiness in the telling ; and there is no stumbling here :

> Amelia mixed the mustard,
> She mixed it good and thick ;
> She put it in the custard
> And made her mother sick,
> And showing satisfaction
> By many a loud huzza
> " Observe," said she, " the action
> Of mustard on Mamma."

or in :

> " Hallelujah " was the only observation
> That escaped Lieutenant-Colonel Mary Jane,

When she tumbled off the platform in the station,
And was cut in little pieces by the train.
Mary Jane, the train is through yer:
Hallelujah, Hallelujah!
We will gather up the fragments that remain.

Fanny Keats, by Marie Adami (John Murray, 10s. 6d.), is a notable contribution to our knowledge of the poet and his family. Fanny had a long life, dying in Madrid at the age of 86, on December 16th, 1889, after following with constant affection and concern the rise of her brother's reputation. She kept in touch with his friends, and after a visit to Rome we find her in receipt of the following letter from Joseph Severn, then English Consul in Rome. . . . "That grave," he wrote her in 1863, "which I can remember as once the object of ridicule, has now become the poetic shrine of the world's pilgrims who care and strive to live in the happy and imaginative region of poetry. The head-stone having twice sunk, owing to its faulty foundation, has been twice renewed by loving strangers, and each time, I am informed, these strangers were Americans. Here they do not strew flowers, as was the wont of olden times, but they pluck everything that is green and living on the grave of the poet. The custodian tells me, that notwithstanding all his pains in sowing and planting he cannot 'meet the great consumption.' Latterly an English lady, alarmed at the rapid disappearance of the verdure on and around the grave, actually left an annual sum to renew it. When the *Custode* complained to me of the continual thefts and asked what he was to do I replied, 'Sow and plant twice as much; extend the poet's domain; for as it was so scanty during his short life, surely it ought to be yielded to him two-fold in his grave.'" There is no record of Fanny's impressions or of her feelings. One of the first things she did when in Rome was to plant two bay trees at the grave with her own hands. Later she wished to substitute for Severn's epitaph:

"Here lie the spoils
of a
Young English Poet
Whose master's hand is cold, whose silver lyre unstrung
And by whose desire is inscribed
That his name was writ in water."

On this matter, interesting to all who have visited the grave by the pyramid of Caius Cestius, Mrs. Adami adds, "Fanny may have thought the matter was settled—may even, in a country where Ferrara marble was easy to obtain, have made tentative arrangements for the new stone, since it was to be raised at her expense, but in the end, fortunately for posterity, nothing came of this discussion. She and Severn may have agreed to abandon their joint proposal, she may have discovered that she had not the money to carry it out. Whatever

was the reason, the new stone was never raised, and when in 1875 the original inscription, then almost illegible, was re-cut and re-leaded and a base added to the original stone, the work was carried out, not by her and Severn, but on the initiative of Sir Vincent Eyre and Miss Sarah Clarke, acting on behalf of George Keats' daughter, Mrs. Fanny Speed. Years later, in 1888, Fanny learnt that an iron railing had been placed round the grave, and that an agreement had been arrived at between the British and German ambassadors and the Roman Municipality by which the tombs of Shelley and Keats, and by that time, of Severn also, were made safe for ever," as Lord Rennell described on our notable pilgrimage a year ago. Fanny cherished in her room in Madrid leaves of ivy, box, rose and violet which she had picked herself in Rome, attached to a steel engraving of the tomb, now in Keats' house at Hampstead. Beautifully printed and illustrated, this desirable volume is a worthy memorial to a sister who cannot rank with Dorothy Wordsworth and who was too young to come within the personal ambit of her famous brother's circle of friends but who for seventy later years lived round his memory.

Dame Ethel Smyth has combined an admiring biography of *Maurice Baring* (Heinemann, 15s.), with a very shrewd analysis of his literary output. She gives pride of place to Baring the poet—deservedly so if for nothing more than the very beautiful human elegies on Lord Lucas and Cecil Spenser; and the exquisite sonnets Of the former, Lawrence of Arabia (T. E. Shaw) said, " I think that if ever a death-poem has been good it is yours. . . . It is a lovely thing: and big, ever so big: and so simply sincere, and grievous, and splendid. I think Lucas will live, thanks to you, for as long as your language. . . . I envy you the perfect welding of art, and feeling, and expression, and nobility of thought." Again Lawrence gets at the heart of his friend's real pre-eminence in poetry and what makes any poetry great and everlasting in a letter assuring Baring, " You have a gift—the great gift—of just putting out your finger, effortlessly, to touch us in the heart. . . . Your poem on Lieut. Spencer is ever so queer; quite half its lines are plain prose, and the whole of it is poetry. Of course I know that bricks, bricks, bricks build a house; and words, words, words make a poem. You, somehow, make prose upon prose become definitely poetic,—and there's the touch of intimacy, given by this everyday language and half-slang phrase, which gets to its target (the heart, as I said above) more truly than grand words could do.

" Your exquisite ear for the syllables of grief . . .

> 'I do not need you changed, dissolved in air
> Nor rarefied,
> I need you all imperfect as you were' . . .

But there's no need for me to quote your verses at you. The judgment that can choose these melting vowels knows better than the rest of us how seldom they have been as surely achieved. . . .

Your novels interested me, held me, pleased me; but those bits of poetry double me up and carry me away. Only by spending such pains to write well could you have caught that melody which lies behind the wording of the poems."

There was a peculiar community of interest between these two. One of Mr. Baring's habits has been to make up anthologies by tearing poems out of papers and books and pasting them up for his own use. One of these, given by him to Lawrence, was being carried by Lawrence when he met his fatal accident, and is now similarly carried about by Sir Ronald Storrs. In the most arresting of Baring's very individual essays, which are surveyed minutely by his biographer, "Poetry and the Moods of the Public," Baring confesses to a weakness for poetry that he can understand at a first reading. "I prefer," he says, "poems which begin like this:

'It was many and many a year ago, in a kingdom by the sea,
That a maiden lived whom you may know by the name of Annabel Lee.'

to poems which begin like this:

'Polyphiloprogenitive
The sapient sutlers of the Lord
Drift across the window panes.'

"I am not saying that one is better than the other, nor that there may not be many who enjoy the latter more than the former. People have the right to enjoy both kinds." And now comes the true Baring touch: which shows him more tolerant than many other objectors to deliberately difficult and perverse poetry, "I admire people who enjoy the difficult kind, and I believe them to be neither foolish nor hypocritical!"

As Dame Ethel Smyth says, "There he shows himself more patient, more humble than Montaigne, who, like Henry James, is merciless on literary obscurity, and who says: "Les difficultés, si j'en rencontre en lisant, je n'en ronge pas mes ongles; je les laisse là après leur avoir faict une charge au deux."

In the Andrew Lang Lecture, *Andrew Lang's Poetry* (Milford, O.U.P.), delivered by Professor A. Blyth Webster at St. Andrew's University last October, Lang as translator, romanticist, classicist and poet, is put vigorously before us, and his wide range of scholarship and imagination is well summed up in the concluding words of the lecturer: ". . . to have written 'Twilight on Tweed,' and 'His Choice of a Sepulchre,' and 'Clevedon Church,' and 'The Fortunate Islands,' and 'The Fairy Minister,' and the rest, seems to partial eyes to be a part of praise. And so to have written, in either harmony of prose or verse, and 'on' or 'after' Homer and Theocritus and Lucian and the Anthology, and Horace and Ronsard, and the Ballads, and Scott, and Tennyson, and a host, that when men turn to them they think awhile of him, this too is praise."

And now for some new volumes of poems. *Dreams Alive* by Gerald Attenborough (Hodder and Stoughton, 2s. 6d.) is a very slim one, but the format is most pleasing and the poems, though few, are of a very delicate quality. Their wistfulness is evident in the quoted stanza, which is the end of the dedication poem:

> Then West I sailed across the hard grey sea
> To find a land washed marvellously by rain—
> Where deep bogs glow, so burns the heart in me
> For you, for you who always must remain.

The format is again noticeable in *Earthquake in Los Angeles* by Clarence Winchester (Cassell, 5s.). The paper is light grey in colour, upon which the Perpetua Type of Eric Gill is exceedingly pleasant to read. The background makes reading out-of-doors pleasant also. I have long wished that some enterprising publisher would produce a series of books with this qualification in mind. White paper dazzles and distresses the eyes, and yet out-of-doors is a desirable place for reading in. Are not the copybooks used in outdoor schools made with green pages? But let us go back to Mr. Winchester. He writes a provocative preface declaring his pleasure in overcoming "the often unappreciated difficulties of verse-writing," which he considers the sole merit of his poems. They have this merit and a good deal of vision and vigour besides, especially in the satire of the title poem, part of which follows:

> The great Eye looked at the city of the Angels,
> the great Eye looked at the city of the sun,
> the great Eye saw in the city of the Angels
> the Man and the Woman, children of the Gun.
> The great Ear heard the hollow cracked laughter,
> the great Ear heard, and heard it again—
> the platinum angels rushing ever after
> the phallic and the bright gold symbols of men.
> The great Lips parted and the words were spoken—
> *I will repay* thundered on the air,
> And the Cross on the Hill turned crimson and was broken,
> but the city of the Angels cried not in despair.
> The great Hand struck, not in vengeance but compassion,
> at the Man and the Woman, spoiled children of the sun,
> and the city of the Angels when sin was its fashion
> sank in its foundations as the race with God was run.

In another preface, that to *Spring in Wensleydale* (De La More Press), Alan Hadfield confesses to greater aspirations—and falls shorter of them. Wishing to appeal to the hearts of the many rather than the heads of the few he forgets those readers who have both heads and hearts, so that though he has pleasant and sincere things to say they

could have been said more strongly and distinctively. His *Summer in Salopium* (St. Anne's Press), a later book, confirms his love of country things and country matters, especially of Shropshire, and there are sensitive allusions to that county's great lovers: Mary Webb and A. E. Housman.

The story of Caractacus is told by Arthur Stamford in *Caradoc* (De La More Press) in fluent, if rather facile, rhymed and unrhymed verse. Like a historical novel, his treatment giving the detailed background and its Welsh setting elaborates Tacitus' account and makes the tale pleasantly readable.

Perhaps it is because her ear has listened much to the language of prayer (and her mystical poems suggest this) that Barbara Rochford can bring to all her poems in *Two Masters* (Burns, Oates, and Washbourne, 2s. 6d.) a grace of phrase and a fusion of modern and older idiom that give them exceptional beauty. A spiritual quality is felt whether she touches on outer or dwells upon inner things. I quote a sonnet from a short sequence called "Candles," though I consider the longer poem "Rhapsody" the best in the book:

There is no real perfection on this earth,
The little, futile things, that can be bound
By their finality, are girt around
With self-wrought bars from things of greater worth.

All else remains unfinished; for creation
Tapers towards the boundless unattained
Always, and all its faculties are strained
To some far-distant point of consummation.

Thus does my body taper to my soul
And that to God; as yonder candle's stem
Straightens its simple line towards the light,
But touches not a perfect diadem—
For still its flame gropes upwards, to a goal
Beyond the hidden summit of the night.

An observing eye and the faculty of finding meaning and significance in everything he sees are the outstanding qualities of the poems of C. Wrey Gardiner in *Evening Silence* (Channing Press, 1s. 6d.). His statementary forms have more of painting than of music, inducing us to look rather than to listen, as in "Light Refracted":

The midday sun beats down upon serene
Unclouded waters' hard metallic sheen,
That blue roof of the world where slow sails move
Over the coral palaces of dead kings
Whose bones are bright white shapeless heaps of things
The sea leaves polished smooth in some dark grove
Of tall aquatic plants with waving arms
Like ghosts that mock at witless Time's alarms.

Where his translations stressed his familiarity with our idiom of speech, the original poems of Tetsuzo Okado in *The Belfrey* (Tokio) betray him as working in a foreign medium by their very naïvety of expression. They are delightfully spontaneous, and some, like "Crickets," have an Eastern tang:

"Sew up the sleeves, sew up the hem,
As the weather will soon be cold.
Get warm clothes ready for them,
Winter will come on young and old."

So the crickets their voices raise
Through nights of autumn ceaselessly,
Warning the dames for wintry days
That they themselves will never see.

In *The Land of Twilight* (Lucknow University Press, 1s.) Ahmed Ali handles our language easily in his effective little symbolic episode of revolution. It has perhaps more of drama than of poetry, but symbolism is better sustained by verse than by prose.

Alison Rich pleads the cause of slum dwellers in *This City* (Lassalle, Ltd., 2s.) with intense sincerity. If she sometimes weakens her poems by a little sentimentality of expression, one accepts them for their pity and understanding of unlovely lives in unlovely places, particularly as her own nostalgia and her faith are made one with theirs. These lines are from "A Garden in Woolwich":

And it seems strange to find a garden in that endless town,
Like a single happy thought, in sad and distraught mind;
Like a vision of the sun, to eyes all dead and blind;
Like a deed of Christian love, in hard world and unkind.

Those who remember a striking poem in a recent number of THE POETRY REVIEW called "The Drum down the Street" will recall the forceful harshness of its style. The *Poems* of A. Nicolaeff (Blackwell) are mostly written in this manner, and her cutting thoughts have jagged edges. It follows that her picture of "Beachy Head" is drawn with remarkable precision and sharpness:

The sea in liquid silver
Pours against the walls of cliffs
Shining wet. The top edge broken,
The cliffs fold backward. Green, purple-brown
They rise and fall in folds of velvet
Against the clouds.
These stand about in mists of opaque blue,
Drift past laden with light, disperse
In strange watery shapes. And some
Wisp upwards, drawing handfuls
Of soft silvery hair across the sun.

E. D. BANGAY.

LITERATURE AND SOCIETY

A year or so ago I commended in these pages a little book, on the interpretation of poetry, by Mr. David Daiches, an Oxford scholar of some distinction. His latest book, *Literature and Society* (Gollancz, 5s.), is a sketch of the evolution, from the Middle Ages till to-day, of our social organization, and shows how our literature grew out of it and with it. He arrives at the conclusion that for the widest enjoyment of literature we need a levelled, class-less society, in which everybody has the maximum share of available leisure. But his political sympathies do not make him applaud the little clique of mutual-admirationists who in common-place drivel or uncouth doggerel chant the glory of the Hammer and the Sickle. Indeed, the clique would stone him, for he declares Tennyson's "Break, break, break" to be "one of the finest poems in the language."

I do not think that he has proved his theory, at any rate so far as poetry is concerned. Sundry times I have learned of men and women who are lovers of poetry, and occasionally writers of poetry, who have to earn their bread by long hours at the desk, behind the counter, or in the engineering shop, even in the kitchen.

Here are some wise and typical extracts from this book:

> "Belief in and stress on the uniqueness of the individual is valuable in literature: it may produce the lyric of personal emotion, the autobiography, the free expression of personality in any form. But individualism of this kind is most treacherous as a theory of art. We know what it has led to in later nineteenth-century poetry, and in literature of our own day. . . . Self-expressionism in art has value only if in expressing himself the artist is illuminating some recognizable human experience. . . . To Addison the poet was a man of unusual sense and insight talking in silver tones to his fellow men in the drawing-room: the romantic poet at his most extreme—or most decadent—is a lone outcast talking to himself in the wilderness."

This is one of those rare books of which one says on turning the last page, "Now I've been given something to think about that was new to me."

A Latter-Day Athenian, by C. H. O. Scaife (Cobden-Sanderson, 3s. 6d.) consists mainly of a religious play, which is unlikely to attain the popularity of *The Murder in the Cathedral*, and of an interesting ballad based on an Arabian legend. The ballad tells of a beggar who built himself a hut by the city's chief mosque. The Caliph was about to visit the city, so the authorities pulled down the eye-sore. Sadly the pious beggar wandered homeless out into the fields. Suddenly he found that the buildings were following him. Moved by the miracle, the Caliph ordered that the holy man's hovel must be re-built on its old site.

It must be confessed that the style sometimes drops into the platitudes and bathos of the street-ballad, thus

The tent stood open to the mosque and, therefore, did not hide
The beggar's hut of straw and clay that stood by the mosque side ;
They pulled the hangings to and fro,
But no contrivances would do—
If they shut out the wretched hut they hid the mosque's front too.

But I liked some of his other poems, such as his tale of how he sailed past Vesuvius, Stromboli and Aetna, and heard the giants whispering to one another that they are dying. And he can be picturesque :

With grey, brilliant body and two orange wings,
A sea-plane lights on the water,
And, smoothly curved, with a ripple,
Breasts to her mooring ;
She lies so light in the harbour,
With her lovely, gay wings.
Just behind her ten black submarines
Are ranged like steel coffins for burial at sea.

Once or twice he reflects the nauseous sentimentality of that blend (in proportions not yet generally agreed) of genius and unconscious charlatanry, D. H. Lawrence. From his ship he sees a workman on a derrick and gushes in detail about the man's manly beauty. Then

We are too far for hearing,
Yet we signal a greeting,
We are friends—
We are lovers.

Mr. Scaife tells us that his poems should be read aloud. Well, we all of us are now and then stirred to read a poem out loud,—but only when it has first arrested and gripped us in silence.

Miss Margaret Goldsmith in her *Sappho of Lesbos* (Rich and Cowan, 10s. 6d.) has achieved something like a brilliant feat of conjuring. The recorded details about one who for twenty centuries was regarded as one of the greatest of poets could be written on a sheet or two of note-paper, yet Miss Goldsmith has out of them produced a quite interesting book of over 270 pages, a book which she terms "a psychological reconstruction." She says "I have tried to describe Sappho's life as it appears to me, as I myself am convinced that she must have lived it." Miss Goldsmith seems to have studied her subject prodigiously. She gives a bibliography of nearly thirty volumes in English, French and German. She makes one point that is new to me. Defending Sappho against the imputations upon her moral character, she suggests that some of the tales told about the poetess may be "based on the life of another Sappho, a famous courtesan, who also lived in Lesbos."

Two Oxford scholars, Mr. T. F. Higham and Mr. C. M. Bowra,

have presented an English rendering of the Ox*ford Book of Greek Verse* (Clarendon Press, 8s. 6d.). The translations have been carefully chosen from various sources, old and modern. In several cases one or other of the editors has furnished a version. The introductory essay on Greek Poetry, by Mr. Bowra, and that by Mr. Higham on Greek Poetry in Translation, are abiding contributions to critical literature.

EDWARD VANDERMERE FLEMING.

BOCCACCIO AND TWO NEW POETS

"If any apology is needed for the portrait that follows, it lies here. Again and again Boccaccio repeated that he wrote for women's instruction and delight, yet none but men have written about him." The portrait is of Giovanni Boccaccio and is by Catherine Carswell (*The Tranquil Heart*, Lawrence and Wishart) who takes advantage of her sex to remedy the failing of post-Renaissance learning which she deplores in the above-quoted passage of her preface. There are two clearly-differentiated types of biography: that which is the plain, unbiassed exposition of facts, and that which is based on a thesis. Her opening remarks on Boccaccio's literary and personal relationship with women lead us to believe that her book is intended to develop a thesis; but as we have been unable to find any clear, concise statement of that thesis, and as its development has been obscured by a host of irrelevant scenic detail, we cannot hope to consider it seriously. As a portrait of Boccaccio the book is disappointing; as a fresco of his times it is lively, correct as far as material is concerned, but somewhat superficial. It gives a good idea of the outward form of the society in which Boccaccio lived, but appreciates little of its inward grace. It is extremely difficult to catch in words the tumultuous but organized spirit of fourteenth-century Italy without presupposing in the reader a considerable knowledge of its political structure and its arts and the peculiar three-quarter pagan attachment of both to the orthodox religion, and Miss Carswell, realizing that the general reader does not in most cases possess that knowledge, tries to convey the spirit by means of a pleasantly flippant style and a succession of footnotes. The style, although it lacks the delicate touch of George Eliot who handled the same theme in a similar way, makes the book entertaining reading; but the footnotes make it very disjointed reading and are frequently of so little value as to make one resent having to search at the foot of the page for them. For instance, it is hardly worth losing one's place in what is called a portrait of Boccaccio to learn that "Luchino during his ten years' lordship in Milan made useful laws, but he was vindictive in punishments and his police were the most efficient in Italy. He was ultimately poisoned by his wife." Or that "It is said that he (Petrarch) first fell in love with her (Laura) when he saw her as a very young girl in the Church of Santa Chiara, when she was wearing a

green dress embroidered with violets." There is still an enormous amount of work to be done in presenting an undistorted survey of fourteenth-century Italian culture, and especially poetry, to the general reading public whose present interest in the art of that time indicates that such a survey would be received sympathetically, and as this book shows Miss Carswell to be in many ways fitted for such work, we hope she will turn from her present rather diffuse style to a real analysis of Boccaccio and his peers, in which case she may be able to avoid such remarks as " These men (Dante and Petrarch) with their great gifts and their moving words, were mighty twisters of love away from its object. They used Beatrice and Laura as false reflectors of their own male egotism."

The Association of Canadian Bookmen has recommended Audrey Alexandra Brown's *The Tree of Resurrection* (Macmillan, 7s. 6d.). For Canada's leading Book Society to have recommended a book of poetry is a tribute not only to the author but also to the literary taste of the selection committee. It is a bold step for a society dealing with popular reading to recommend such a book, and as far as we can remember it has not been attempted by the book societies of England. It is pleasing to see even so small a triumph of good literature over commercialism. The attitude of English book societies to new poetry seems to be that if an " Authority " could vouch that a volume is " as good as " Shakespeare's, and could certainly predict for it as long and as wide a fame, it would be accepted, but in default of any such futile guarantee, it is ignored. Surely such an attitude demands, for the sake of consistency, that a similar standard should be set up for fiction and that novels should not be recommended because they are likely to be popular or because they represent some new and important development but because they seem " as good as "—in goodness knows what qualities—anything of Austen or Dickens. Audrey Brown is no Shakespeare, nor, although a romantic with a love for the music of words, is she a Keats ; but this new volume of hers is most satisfactory reading and contains things of real interest and worth, and fully justifies recommendation. " Laodamia " is a successful poem in a difficult form—the six-line stanza in five five-footers and an Alexandrine. Even in this form Audrey Brown can indulge in the music of words and their atmospheric effects—

> All day they moved before a tranquil breeze :
> On many a green mysterious isle they came,
> Blossomed with brazen orchis wild as flame
> And strangely set with brooding secret trees :
> Clear lay the small lagoon ; they entered not,
> But trimmed their sails anew and fled the haunted spot.

In freer forms she can write :

> Crystal-lucid, coloured as

Alexandrite, chrysoprase,
Chrysoberyl, chrysolite. . . .

But her word-harmonies are perhaps most successful in the short poem "Gifts." She is, however, a little inclined to become, in the well-worn phrase, intoxicated by the exuberance of her own verbosity.

The poems of Eric N. Batterham, who died two years ago, have now been published in one volume *A Kite's Dinner* (Herbert Joseph, 5s.) with an introduction by Walter de la Mare, whose description of Batterham's life is a very necessary approach to the poems. To appreciate them fully it is essential to remember that while he was writing them, ever since 1920, he was slowly but painfully dying of an incurable disease, and that he knew it. Under such circumstances his poems—lyrics and epigrams—might well be morbid, either pathetic or bitter; yet there is no bitterness in his work, only a mild sarcasm in his scorn of the crowd's "greasy gluttonies," nor is there any flood of pathos in it—self-pity was not one of his foibles. Although his work rises thus above his physical environment, it does not rise only to fly, as does so much of its kind, into an obscure personal realm of escape; instead it attains to the expression of a strong philosophy, based on his considerable erudition and his instinctive adoration of youth. In the mental position of Boethius, he developed, like him, a personally-limited but personally-satisfying philosophical comfort, perfectly expressed in "The Proud Antagonist" written "from a sanatorium":

By day, light laughter leaps from lip to lip;
Young faces with delusive bronze aglow
See hours unmarked as sea-foam come and go
In gay and unregarding fellowship.
But nightly, when the turning earth lets slip
Her sevenfold veils of light, then—secret, slow—
The shadow of the Slayer to and fro
Exults, as he renews his loosening grip.

Swift-marching Mind, press on—nor cease to vaunt
Your mastery of the proud antagonist!
Raiding your ranks from his obscurist haunt,
He, with a scornful flick of his lean wrist,
Scatters your dream-forged armour of adamant
Utterly, as a shred of morning mist.

Perfect expression of this philosophy is one of Batterham's highest qualities and seldom deserts him. His work abounds with phrases which hold a perfect unity of sound, image and meaning—

Lovely as flying foam, and still as sleep,
Poised on a rock, he leans and looks below,
'Twixt doubt and daring, wondering how deep
The creaming waters flow.

This quality is well illustrated by his epigrams ; as " Shooting Gallery."

Like coloured balls, light-poised on fountain's spray,
For chance-led riflemen to try their skill,
We gaily dance on nothing all our day ;
Cometh the one true marksmen : we are still.

In all his work there is a curious tentative cheerfulness, pallid as April sunshine, which give the whole an air of quiet, contemplative restraint. For bringing these gifts into the known from the unknown we are grateful to Mr. de la Mare and of the others who realized that what he said of another was true of Batterham :

Long-silenced songs in ancient Aprils sung
Live in the spoken music of your tongue.

Son of David (John Lane, 7s. 6d.) is a remarkable achievement—the best work S. W. Powell has done. Very different in subject and manner from his other poems and novels, this new novel claims to fill in the thirty unrecorded years of the life of Jesus, beginning with his early childhood in Nazareth and ending with his departure from his home " at God's bidding." It is a very simple narrative. Mr. Powell has resisted the temptation to fill in the blank years with a multitude of detail and an elaborate chronicle of yearly, if not daily events. He has used his imagination rationally and not sensationally, recognizing that here was obviously a period of quiet development and realization ; there was no need and even no opportunity for unusual, exciting and exceptional happenings. The boy grows up in an almost normal way, the eldest of his family, respected by his father and better understood by his mother, just a little different, a little more serious and a little more developed than the average lad, passing through adolescence with an inward security against normal temptations and a happy and strengthening issue therefrom, doing the daily work as Joseph's apprentice with little liking for the task, but schooling himself to it, developing confidence not only in his ability as a carpenter but in his ability as a man, finding in his work and his family and in his health and his associations with his fellows, that life not only challenged him but also that life was indeed very good, " and its fullness was before him to shape and make with good will, courage, wisdom, love and endurance." A beautifully written book, as well as healthy and wise in its treatment of this subject, remaining in style and content very much like Allen Brockington's blank verse chronicles of *The Nazarene*, the gradual growth of vision and intelligence, merging manhood into Godhood, proving again the truth of the conviction that came to W. T. Stead in Holloway Gaol that it was possible, nay an absolute command, not to be a Christian but to be a Christ. Every young man of decent instincts and parts can see himself, his aspirations and actual experiences, in the *Son of David*.

Alberto Moravia's *Wheel of Fortune* (Cassell, 8s. 6d.) might have

been an epic, in its scope and length, of present-day Roman life, but is confined too much to two families on two different social levels, although interlocked by intrigue and passion, violent, bitter, unscrupulous, but barren,—surely not representative of place and period? The author is a young man already made famous in Italy by two previous novels, but hitherto not known here in translations. Talent for meticulous social analysis eventually will be used to better and finer purpose.

The Year's Poetry, 1937 (The Bodley Head, 5s.), is the fourth issue in an annual series which THE POETRY REVIEW welcomed. Unlike some anthologies, this book makes no arrogant claim to contain "the best poems of the year," a silly claim in the case of books which, being published in autumn, can hardly include any poem appearing in the second half of the year. This volume is a fair and competent presentation of what is being published to-day as poetry. The editors, Mr. Kilham Roberts and Mr. Geoffrey Grigson, amusingly reveal in their preface that they have not invariably agreed about the choice of each poem, and they were doubtless chosen (and wisely) by the publisher for this very purpose. Again and again, for ages, there have been disputes, often acrimonious, as to what is, and what is not, "poetry." One may have a suspicion as to which editor was the more broad-minded, the more concessive, and one may say, with Shelley,

"Oh, that it should be so!"

For the selection does rather favour the representatives of what is undoubtedly only a well-advertised minority-fashion. Still, the book can be recommended.

* * *

EVELYN COUCHMAN of MENTON, A.M., FRANCE, in HOMO SAPIENS supplied "a personal comment on Mr. Spens Steuart's interesting letter":

What have they wrought—these who were born as men?
How shall they answer for the centuries?
These who, distorting progress, twist again
Creative powers into deformities,
Converting science, knowledge, strength to heal,
Into machines of torment and of death!
Expert destroyers! Poor blind fools who seal
Their own dark doom! Poor suicidal breath!

Only the Earth is sane. Nature alone
Still speaks the Word through mystic leaf and tree,
Through all her simple creatures who have grown
Wise in the wisdom of simplicity.
With eyes unblinded, these are nearer God,
Walking with Him the Way of Life He trod.

THE POETS' FELLOWSHIP:

THE PREMIUM EDITOR'S REPORT,

Our awards have been made not, in every case, so much on account of technical perfection but for sincere and courageous handling of living topics. They are made to :—

Chloris Heaton, Berkhamstead; M. E. Mitchell, Hampstead; Norah M. Horton, Burnley; Kathleen Anderson, Kingswood.

Amongst those "Highly Commended" especial mention must be made of Vera I. Arlett, N. K. Cruickshank, I. Sutherland Groom and Phoebe Rayner.

Highly Commended:

Elizabeth F. Alden, Haddenham;
Vera I. Arlett, Worthing;
Langford Budville, Worthing;
N. K. Cruickshank, Stoke-by-Clare;
Margaret Lockerbie-Goff, London, N.;
I. Sutherland Groom, Bristol;
E.W.M., South Croydon;
Doris Major, Hendon;
Iërne Ormsby, Thurgoland;
Phoebe Rayner, Rivington;
F. St. Paul, Tonbridge;
Kumar Roy, Pondicherry;
Brenda F. Skene, London, W.;
Hilda M. Slade, Ramsgate;
Arthur Lynnford-Smith, Wanstead;
Mabel K. Toovey, Amersham;
E.H.W., Whimple.

Commended:

Irene Brittain Bell, Stockton;
Rosa A. Berry, Hucclecote;
Lilian Bird, Kettering;
T. E. Casson, Pennington;
Evelyn Couchman, Menton;
Muriel Crighton, Chester;
O. C. Dougan, London, N.;
Reginald C. Eva, Hove;
Dulcie Eden Greville, Wakefield;
Arthur Harvey, Tyrone;
Jessie B. Heard, Bristol;
M. H. Hill, London, W.;
Irene H. Lewis, Dorking;
Redcliffe McKie, Hove;
Owen Nevar, Broadstairs;
E.Curt Peters, Chalfont St. Giles;
T. Pittaway, Frome;
Marguerite Pollard, Oxford;
Alice Roundy, Brookline, Mass.;
I. Sarrendranayagam, Colombo;
Frederick E. Slade, Harrow;
M. H. Tattersall, Dulwich;
M. Freda Turner, Hove;
Edith M. Walker, Bournemouth.

The usual premium competition is continued. MSS. should reach "The Premium Editor, The Poetry Review Office, 36 Russell Square, London, W.C.1," by April 1st, accompanied by stamped addressed envelope, and if criticism is desired, 2s. 6d. (For a more detailed postal criticism, 5s. should be sent.)

Canadian Prize Poems:

The Poetry Society of Winnipeg, affiliated with The Poetry Society (Incorporated) reports that in the recent poem competition 544 entries were received—coming from coast to coast, "and we felt it was very worth while stimulating such creative effort in our midst." The Judges were Professor Watson Kirkconnell, Professor Aaron

Perry, and Rev. Father Lahey, S.J. The competition had two classifications :—Dominion (open to residents of the Dominion), $25.00 for best Sonnet, and for best Lyric (not to exceed 30 lines). Provincial (open to residents of Manitoba), $15.00 for best Sonnet, and for best Lyric (not to exceed 30 lines).

The first prize in Class I went to our old friend and contributor, Beresford Richards, Athabasca, Alberta, for REFUGE :

I am no more upon dark passion tossed
When to the haven of your breast I come,
Though shorn of pride and my rich cargoes lost,
You will forgive and tell me I am home.
If you should close that bourn to me, I know
No other harbourage or sheltered sound—
Prey of the ebb and pariah of the flow,
No chartered course nor ever homeward bound
I would be derelict, a mockery ;
A thing of scorn for all with ports to make. . . .
Oh ! but I know you will not bar to me
The refuge of your love nor me forsake :
Into the quiet haven of your breast
I come, and dusk is here, and night, and rest.

The First Prize in Class II was awarded to Sara E. Carsley, Calgary, Alberta, for IMMORTAL HOUR :

This is Love's hour ; the winds on every hill
Sing, and the withered wastes break forth in flower.
Yet with far-echoing footstep, faint and chill,
Draws on the darker hour.
The lonely shadow of the cypress lies.
Even on Paradise.

So brief our blossom ; then, the falling year,
The folding of life's petals into sleep,
Drifting upon the still and shadowy mere
Where our lost dreams lie deep.
And all whom Love enriched with golden store
Remember Love no more.

This is Love's hour ; from his far world he brings
A lovelier light than ours that shall illume
With alien glory all life's common things,
To the dark verge of doom,
When Time's tall battlements of night and day
Crumble in dust away.

O Flower of all delight ! how strong a Power,
From formless night, from unimpassioned clay,

Has drawn us, and with this immortal hour
Has crowned our mortal day!
Drink deep the joy from His own vintage pressed,
And leave with Him the rest.

The First Prize in Class III was gained by Thomas Saunders, Varsity View P.O., Man., for How Softly O'er the Waters:

How softly o'er the waters steals the moon,
Her flowing mantle silv'ring all the bay,
Her pale face passionless! Sombre and grey,
The wave-washed sand receives her glance, immune
As she from fooling. Over every dune,
Austere, her beauty hovers; while the play
Of wave on wave goes on; the pull and sway
Of might on might unending. . . .
Too, too, soon,
Alas! shall pass the towering majesty
Of this vast night, and all nights, in their kind,
From these frail eyes. They shall be dimmed, but these—
The moon, the waters and the sand—shall be!
But dead, as now, to the aspiring mind
That scales beyond their cold immensities.

The First Prize in Class IV was won by Alexander Aitken Rattray, Boissevain, Man., with The Garden:

That self-same silver orb that lights our skies,
Wrapt Grecian Samos in a silver shroud,
And Samnian Sappho moved to sing, poured out
In song her deathless, ageless harmonies,
To soothe and ease the tired hearts of men,
Here in this garden the white radiance
Stirs up the silver-throated nightingale
To sudden floods of vibrant melody,
That in mellifluous, fluting cadence, pours
Cascades of mellow notes into the night.
What things remain? The mingled scent of thyme,
Of jasmine and of musk, the nightingale,
The moonlight and the stars, the trellised bower
We sat in, you and I, only last year.
Those things we deemed as transient still remain,
Only the love we thought could never fade,
So fragrant, so enduring, and so strong,
More fragile than them all has crumbled,
And I am here alone, and you are—Where?

* * *

Public school verse is in eclipse. We see less and hear less about it and even Oxford is not so productive as formerly. But one produc-

tion by a *Poetry Reviewer* when seventeen, of a maturity rare in modernity, has greatly impressed our New Verse Editor, who, in recommending its use in THE POETRY REVIEW said : *Ubiquity* by JOHN H. ELLIOT I have read many times to try to discover the secret of its versification and construction. I can only say I admire the result. I think that in this poem the author has said what he wants to say and said it poetically, and it was well worth saying. The second stanza seems to be the only one constructed on a plan : none the less the rhythm everywhere holds good :

The night dew lisps on the olives,
the curtain of evening hangs low,
the little hills huddle at vespers
in the lamp of the crater's glow.
Rest, rest you that are weary,
weary and footsore with treading the vine,
son of a long strong slaving line,
sleep in your valley hut below.

The rim of your world is small
as the rim of a goblet of wine ;
Its circle is drawn by the Mediterranean surf
on tideless, unwashed beaches,
and inland the arc of it reaches
only the sweep of the hills with their sulphureous pall.

Your life is its eating and sleeping,
for your work is not your life
but a hardly-realized background for weaving stars
of your thought's bright fancy, a bag for keeping
the body a-rub with the soul's unquenched desires.

Your life is a gossamer hoping
for a treasure you never find,
for a lovely face that never appears,
for a perfect ease in your mind.
Son of a father who died in the valley,
lived and died in the same small cup,
treading the grapes through the long hot ages,
treading the grapes down the years
Tramp, Tramp, Tramp, Tramp
through the same ten toes they bubble up
Tramp, Tramp, Tramp, Tramp
before the tramp of the armies of Ur
Tramp, Tramp, yet never stirring,
clutched in the hot red succulent slur
of the bursting grapes neath the patient stamp
Tramp, Tramp, Tramp, Tramp—

father, son, father, son,
all as one since time begun . . .

And they lie in a row in the valley.

Tramp
Is this all your being?
Tramp
Are you really alive
that you live and die without ever seeing
the consummation of dreams arrive?

Your life is in your tramping,
your legs smoke with blood to the knee,
smoke with the blood of the ageless grapes:
there's your life which you cannot see.
For whenever a glass is lifted, wherever the wine is free,
it holds your body, it holds your soul,
yours and your fathers' blood in each bowl.
And in palaces gorgeous beyond your dreams,
in twisted taverns by misty streams,
men who dwell as you never knew
say of the stuff you live to brew
"This is made of the singing south,
of the scented, amorous, dusky groves,
of the purple hills at creation's mouth."

Awaken, brother, 'tis made of you.

M. E. MITCHELL addresses "THOSE OF OTHER OPINION WHO HAVE PAID TRIBUTE TO DICK SHEPPARD. (It would hardly be possible to say more in 18 lines—or twice as many.)

AT least you grant us this—here was a man,
Dick Sheppard, and never a shepherd ran
More merrily from needy flock to flock,
Skipping his lively hours against the clock
Of Time and sorrow, till Time ceased,
In silent homage to the people's priest.

"A human soul" you say "we found indeed
Himself more individual than a creed,
His home more universal than a place.
We loved the comic wonder of his face.
He was the rich man's friend, the poor man's mate"
But there is more—he made articulate
The people's hidden will that wars shall cease:
Gay Dick, kind Dick, brave Sheppard as you please:

Right Dick, we say, we folk who heard him preach
That peace and plenty is within our reach:
And not with Francis shall he share our crown,
Rather with Chaucer's "parson of a town."

H. T. Hunt Grubb sends a tribute to Algernon Charles Swinburne: Born 5th April, 1837, Died 10th April, 1909:

England's sweet singer hailed from Northern lands;
Poet of wave-worn steeps by lonely braes,
Ere song changed foam to flow'rs of love, on ways
Oft fruitless as his loved sea's barren sands.
Last troubadour whose brows Queen Mary's hands
Ne'er garlanded, too late such meed, or praise;—
Gone fair dead women, all save gold-bright rays
Of lyric lustre where the Muse commands.
Swift Atalanta famed when Greece was young,
Iseult of splendid dim Arthurian years.
"Man in the highest!" loud his rich lyre rung,
And voiced the elder Bards above his peers.
Borne by his magic, Fancy roves wide seas
To find rare Gardens of Hesperides.

To Byron, by a well-known Greek poet, Mr. M. Malakassis, translated into English from the Modern Greek, by S. Stephanides has been sent from Athens to H. E. M. Caclamanos and passed on to The Poetry Review as a Greek homage to Byron, on the 150th anniversary of his birth:

A deathless end in vain didst seek where rang the battle's call
Yet even thus it failed thee not, thy sweet and orphic lay;
And while one fatal April morn the Gods and the Muses all
Gave thee for fun'ral Crown the sun behind the clouds banks gray
Amid the moan of earth and sky they, warrior chieftains brave,
Bore thee upon their shoulders strong unto a Spartan's grave.

Captain Alfred Holm Laursen, Lyngvig, Ring kjbing, whose poem on Kipling appeared in a recent issue of The Poetry Review, writes in renewing his membership subscription, "I have to thank you very much for The Poetry Review. I never knew, before I became a member, that such an excellent paper existed, but now I am looking forward to each copy with the greatest impatience. Being a poet myself, but living a very lonely life, I feel like moving in a circle of kindred souls, whose world and fellowship I should not otherwise be able to reach. You may be proud of The Poetry Review as I am proud of being a member of the Society. I wish you every luck, as surely as it is true that 'Where there is no vision the people perish,' also it is true that 'Our young men shall dream dreams' and The Poetry Review will help them to do that."

THE DANTE PILGRIMAGE

To join a Pilgrimage organized by The Poetry Society is a very pleasurable and satisfying experience, as many privileges and much hospitality not available to the ordinary visitor, are showered upon those taking part in the adventure, writes one of the Dante pilgrims on behalf of his colleagues.

In Florence we were met on arrival by Mr. Harold E. Goad, the erudite Director of the British Institute, who, with his colleagues and representatives of the Ministry of Culture welcomed us to the City of Flowers.

Dr. Irena Moretti, of the University of Paris, Artist and Poetess, who possesses special qualifications for her task, conducted us on five successive mornings over the historic buildings of the City, explaining its art treasures in such an attractive and penetrating way, that she contrived to make the past live for us again. Her untiring enthusiasm caused her to be everywhere welcomed by the custodians with smiles, and on her approach they invariably proceeded to give access to rooms and treasures not usually shown. We became acquainted with Michael Angelo and Fra Angelico and Donatello and the Medici from the inside.

Our pilgrimage was initiated by an informal reception at the British Institute, of which we were made honorary members, Prof. Piero Rebora reading and commenting on the seventeenth canto of the *Divine Comedy*, with special reference to Dante's own personal and political associations with Florence, and subsequently we followed Dante through the city,—the birthplace, the Nicchia di Dante in the court of the palace of Folco Portinari where Dante as a boy is supposed to have waited for his daughter Beatrice, the humble church of San Martino, in which, tradition says, Dante was married to Gemma Donati, the sister of the chief of the Neri, to the monument in the richly-stored pantheon of Santa Croce, near the tombs of Ugo Foscolo and Rossini, and monuments to Alfieri, Carducci, and Machiavelli, marvelling too at the many tablets on buildings associated with the life and works of Dante or quoting lines therefrom, marvelling most of all perhaps at the monument to his persistent vitality, the great Sala di Dante in the exquisitely preserved fourteenth century palace of the Guild of Wool, where thousands gather to hear Dante read and expounded from the imposing tribune erected by the late Duke di Sermoneta, to which we were introduced by the venerable President of the Dante Society, H.E. Senator Guido Mattzoni, the celebrated Dante authority, poet, critic and scholar, who was responsible for the definitive centenary edition.

Our Dante pilgrimage was continued over the snow-clad Appenines to Ravenna, once the capital of Italy, now lying in isolated grandeur, forsaken by the sea, surrounded by marsh lands tenanted by huge flocks of sheep. In cold sunny weather we laid lilies on the tomb of Dante, who lived and died here in exile. A lovely masoleum, close by where Byron lived centuries later, is the final repository of his

bones. Near by are treasured urns, coffins and caskets which previously enclosed them, and the original grave is jealously preserved, with a leafy laurel tree growing therefrom. We turned aside here to examine beautiful mosaics in many ancient churches and to visit the tomb of Theodoric, with its remarkable circular roof, thirty-six feet in diameter, made from one solid block of stone over two hundred tons in weight, catching a glimpse before we left of the beautiful Pineta where Dante walked and Byron rode.

At a public reception arranged by Mr. Goad at the British Institute in the stately Antinori Palace, attended by representatives of the literary and artistic life of Florence, Mr. Goad warmly welcomed the pilgrims and approved their object and concern, which he had himself done so much to encourage, direct and amplify. Mr. Wallis Mansford, as reported in the *Florence Weekly News*, "underlined the vital force for good represented by the British Institute as directed by Capt. Goad, adding a brilliant salute to Florence's many beauties, while Cav. Galloway Kyle acknowledged on behalf of the party the warm welcome and intimate hospitality accorded them in Florence. The particular arrangements, he said, made by and through Capt. Goad were admirable and had been perfectly carried out, to the unique enjoyment and advantage of the pilgrims who represented a large body concerned with poetry and regarding it as a potent force in the modern world—a 'necessity,' as the Duce had boldly asserted on the occasion of the notable Keats-Shelley pilgrimage to Rome in February last, a remark that has made a profound impression and completely justified their activities. In consequence of it they regarded Dante, whose immortal memory they saluted, as being as vital and influential to-day as in his own time, the prophet of Italy's unity, the delineator of the strong man who saved weaker humanity from themselves. Dante lives—while his more materially powerful contemporaries are merely names and monuments! It was, he said, The Poetry Society's duty and privilege to do homage to his genius in his own city of flowers, the centre of the works of the Spirit, the mother of truth and beauty; and by their testimony to draw the attention of the thinking world to the glories of Florence which had been revealed to them so intimately and intellectually in these last days, and to the close association of English poets and art workers with that wonderful city. Cav. Kyle added that in course of their pilgrimage they had seen a white dove perched on the head of the statue of Dante in the Piazza Sante Croce, and had taken it as a symbol of Peace, confirming the ideals adumbrated in the *Divina Commedia* and the definition of The Poetry Society's mission as ambassadors of spiritual understanding and concord".

Other receptions with which the party were honoured were given by Countess Edith Rucellai, a daughter of Mrs. Bronson, to whom her friend Robert Browning dedicated *Asolando*. (Here, in the Ruccelli Palace, we had the privilege of seeing a large, unpublished collection of intimate Browning letters.) And by the Marchesa Ginevra Nicco-

lini, whose recently published *Chronicles of a Florentine Family* (Cape, 1933) based on the Niccolini archives of the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries, give a vivid, detailed account of mediaeval Florentine life and manners.

Another reception, this time a matinée, was arranged at the Lyceum Club by Signora di Pietro,—an extension of the cordial *entente* developed during our stay in Florence, and the large private gallery at the Villa Vittoria was opened to us by Contessa Contini Bonacassi who with the Count accompanied us through the magnificent galleries and exquisite private apartments rich with ancient and modern art and particularly notable for examples of the Spanish school of Murillo and Velasquez and also Titian, followed by a final social gathering at the University Club, arranged by the Ministry of Culture, at which we met officially the Podesta and other magistrates, the President and several officials of the E.N.I.T., the Chief of Police, and other civic authorities, as well as the distinguished members of the Anglo-Italian community. On behalf of the Rector of the University an " ave atque vale " address was given with great fervour and enthusiasm and protestation of the irrefrangible unity of our common devotion to the memory and ideals of Dante and the life of the intellect exemplified in Florence, the city, as Renan asserted, which after Athens has done the most for the human spirit, " with Athens being the mother of all truth and all beauty."

Of course while in Florence we did not neglect the Brownings,—Casa Guidi and the Scottish Presbyterian Church, which has a record on a tablet above the pew they occupied of Robert and Elizabeth having been regular worshippers there, and most fascinating of all we followed Robert from the bookstall at which he bought for eightpence " the square, old yellow book " (now in the Balliol library) out of which grew *The Ring and the Book*, following him on his homeward journey across the city as described by him in his prelude, and then by the Capponi Palace and the San Clemente Palace, where the Young Pretender died in 1788, abandoned by his wife, the Countess d'Albany, to the Protestant cemetery beyond the walls, a quiet cheerful place with the rose-covered graves of Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Arthur Clough and Walter Savage Landor.

And then to Rome, leaving with reluctance friendly Florence under its brilliant blue sky. Flowers again were laid on the graves of Keats and Shelley which are no longer neglected by custodians and visitors ; and then on to the richly stored Keats house. Our good friend and Vice-President, His Excellency Senator Gallenga Stuart, was unable to meet us on this occasion, greatly to his regret, being confined to the house with a cold, similarly to a number of our Roman friends. It was with profound sorrow that we heard subsequently that Senator Stuart died suddenly on the day of our departure,—a great loss to the friends of Anglo-Italian amity, to the furtherance of which he had devoted his life and out of which we trust a permanent Bureau of

Cultural Relations will develop. In his place the Ministry provided us with a most considerate and helpful cicerone in the person of Signor Vittorio Liebman, who arranged for and accompanied us on the various public and private appointments which filled up our too brief time in Rome. We spent three illuminating hours on the Augustean Millenary Exhibition under the leadership of Signor Italo Sicardi, through whom we linked up a very strong British interest in Imperial Rome.

We found in Rome another Casa di Dante, an ancient building dedicated to the Dante Society by Queen Margaretta, where we were received by the President, Contessa Francesetti, greatly admiring the library and the lecture hall which is crowded to full capacity on Sunday mornings to hear Dante read canto by canto, standing room being provided for the populace who flock to hear the inspiring words of the greatest Italian.

We had the great distinction of being received in the spacious and dignified state apartments at the Capitol by Prince Ruspoli, the Deputy Governor,—a tall, handsome, English-educated gentleman, who chatted with great affability and frankness on a variety of matters not entirely connected with our pilgrimage. From the Capitol we proceeded to a reception given in our honour by Baroness Gabrielle Quarles Van Ufford in an artistic home particularly notable for the Baron's large collection of first editions and rare books, particularly Chinese. Illness prevented a number of distinguished personages attending the function, but among those who were present on this delightful occasion were His Excellency Generale Conte Renato Piola Caselli, Countess Mary Piola Caselli, Duchessina Clorinda di Revel, Marquis G. Dragonetti de Torres (gentleman-in-waiting to H.M. Queen Elena), Mme. Marescaletri Belli, Contessa Castelli, Contessa Maraini, Marchesa Gouzaga, Duchessa Caracciolo di Belcasto, Donna Lilian Caracciolo, née Eaton, Mme. Boccini, née Stelluti Scala, Mme. Graselli-Barni, Mme. Pirzio Biroli (sister-in-law of the famous General of that name, who distinguished himself in the recent Abyssinian War), Baroness Sanjust di Teulada, their Excellencies Marquis and Marchesa Godi di Godio, Marchesa Della Chiesa, Marchesa Rappini (a relative of Swinburne), Mme. van Panuys (wife of the Netherlands Chargé d'Affaires), H. E. Moire Varé, Mme. de Sury d'Aspremont (wife of the Commander of the Swiss Guard at the Vatican), Col. Baron and Baroness Pfyffer d'Altishofen (Col. of the Swiss Guard), and Mr. J. Froes (English), Mr. Amory Matthews (U.S.A.), M. Fordanov (Italian), and Conte Antonini (Chamberlains to H.H. the Pope), Countess Antonini, Marchesa de Maillardoz (wife of the Chamberlain to H.H. the Pope), Count Filippo Raimondi (Knight of Malta), Contessina Raimondi and many other distinguished members of Roman Society.

The reception was delightfully informal, the only speech-making being a special address at the request of Baroness Van Ufford on

Byron in Italy, impressively given by Mr. Wallis Mansford. "So," as a participant writes, "ended a Pilgrimage which was unique for the variety of its episodes, the richness and beauty always conspicuous, the tribute paid to the poets in Italy, so satisfying to the spirit, and the many interesting and intimate contacts made in the personal homes and other buildings described, which well illustrate the boundless hospitality awaiting an English visitor to Italy when he approaches it as a member of the delegation of The Poetry Society. The organizer and conductor can rest assured that his work in connection with the pilgrimage is well repaid by the full measure of enjoyment and delight derived from it by everyone privileged to take part."

A Franciscan pilgrimage, based on Mr. Goad's *Franciscan Italy* (Methuen) is in contemplation for the end of April, when Mr. Goad will be in Assisi for a week at the disposal of a party. Further details may be obtained from the Editor of THE POETRY REVIEW.

Mr. Benjamin Musser, a Vice-President of The Poetry Society and member of the Tertiary of St. Francis, has published through the Macmillan Company of New York a collection of seventeen papers and addresses he has devoted to "Franciscan Poets," treating comprehensively the poet friars and sisters Clare and other poet followers of Franciscan ideals, from Dante and Petrarch to Francis Thompson. Of course, St. Francis himself is the first of Franciscan poets, "not only by virtue of priority in point of time, but first because his poetry is the most truly Franciscan, being the mirror of himself, and himself the Mirror of Perfection. . . . From his good mother, Pica, he learned songs in French and Provencal. He improvised others, singing blithely his extemporaneous chansons with Gallic lightness, with Italian sweetness and with a new beauty cast over the classicism that is Latin." Mr. Musser points out that another facet in the jewel of Umbria was his power as a dramatist; in everything he did there was unrehearsed theatre in its most exalted sense.

Mr. Musser recognizes that, "In all the undisputed and in all the probable writings of St. Francis, there is that passion and beauty and word magic we call poetry. Poetry fairly shines in these fragments, in his *Rules*, in his *Admonitions*, in his *Hermit-Rules*, in his *Testament*, in *Ultima Volutas* (to the Clares), in the *Prayer for Lady Poverty* and in other prayers, in the plea *On Reverence for the Lord's Body*, in his letters, in his *Blessings of Brother Leo*. When we come to his actual poems, those exquisite *Laudi* he sang even as he composed their simple lines, usually in the vernacular, and some of which happily were copied out by his companions and a few of these preserved, one will always be treasured and forever associated with him as the very essence of his character, and this of course is that first genuine religious poem in the Italian language, the so-called "Canticle of the Sun," the *Laudes Creaturarum*. . . . Renan called this canticle 'the loveliest piece

of religious poetry since the time of the Evangelists'; Gabriel Faure, agreeing, adds that it is 'the first greeting of the Italian Renaissance to the Nature she had found again.' . . . *The Prayer of St. Francis for Lady Poverty*, in itself a great poem of magnificent imagery, as well as a marvellous prayer, if we allow for exuberance of the Latin temperament, is from the so-called *Operi Sancti Francisci*."

Mr. Musser has also compiled a collection of *Canticles for St. Francis*, an anthology of poems on the saint of Assisi gathered from many sources and by many contributors, including a number of POETRY REVIEW poems published at the time of the 700th anniversary of his death, showing that that immortal spirit is still a tremendous influence and inspiration, justifying Mr. Musser's conclusion that "he is still, this sweet impractical poet, this bird-talker, the greatest human leader of religious thought and striving in the whole world."

THE LYLIE PRAGNELL GOLD MEDAL

A poetry recital by the holders of The Poetry Society's Junior or Schools' Gold Medal for verse-speaking in competition for the Lylie Pragnell Gold Medal was held on Saturday, February 5th, 1938. This new gold medal has been endowed in memory of the late Miss Lylie Pragnell, L.G.S.M., a voice specialist of great repute, who was a pioneer in vocal therapy. It is very appropriate that this special distinctive award should recognize developed speech training and the possession of a full, strong, resonant voice which Miss Pragnell was so successful in working for, and that it should be offered for competition among those senior candidates who by perseverance and accomplishment have already obtained the Schools' Gold Medal, thereby ensuring for this unique competition prior preparation and a higher standard than would be possible if it had remained open to all comers without any particular qualification. It also provides for this very important section of verse-speakers a competition and a distinction similar to the Lady Margaret Gold Medal.

Prof. Guy Pertwee, V.P., in announcing his award said: "The standard was an extremely good one and compared very favourably with other competitions I have had the privilege of judging in the same room. In almost every case the words were well delivered and got over and showed genuine enthusiasm, though a slight tendency to overproduction was occasionally apparent. There was real love of words here, approaching the subject seriously and with a real sense of appreciation, which is absolutely necessary. In this subject we are trying to mirror the words and feelings of the poet: never take a lot of verse and use it for a medium of your self expression, but be yourself in attempting an artistic performance. Do not over-dramatize. There are many points to remember in the delivery of poetry, the two most important being simplicity and sincerity. Put them together like a pair of heavenly twins. Try and remember that there are many, many musical devices that the poet indulges in for his writing, and

your renderings can be helped so much by a sort of sound-conscious attention to that; get the real sense of rhythm and quantity, and at a pause make it a vital part of the poem; long, short or whether at the end of the line, make it a real part of the pattern of the poem,—this helps so much towards a real, musical rendering. Pause gives music to the poem and quantity also, that is, the time taken over the utterance of the syllable. Do not overdo it, but feel how much time should be taken over it and render accordingly. When you begin a poem never finish until the end,—never let go of the continuity of the piece."

Individual remarks included the following pertinent comments: "Some tendency to be a little bit conscious in voice-production and inclined to play upon the words and give a pretty effect, which takes away from the simplicity and sincerity: tone clear, though not always pure; a tendency to pinch and over-lengthen vowel-sounds. . . . Simple, clear and sincere with no tricks; tone colour rather immature, but that will come later with a fuller depth, but enunciation was pure. . . . A few consonants slipped away; a very real sense of poetry and a lively imagination, with a very good quality of voice. No tricks and quite sincere, but did not capture the measure of the sound poem, it was really a question timing, a very important quality. . . . Very good voice—a little bit conscious: good uniformity and good force, though following an inclination to force tone."

Mr. Pertwee awarded the Medal to LAVENDER V. DOLLAR, who had "an excellent choice of poems. Her voice is admirably produced, with a real sense of rhythm, atmosphere and diction. The words came very beautifully with a fine sense of music: full of vitality. The second piece was a little forced at times and enthusiasm perhaps was a little overdone, but the whole effect was arresting and beautiful."

SIR JOHNSTONE FORBES ROBERTSON

The General Council of The Poetry Society, at their quarterly meeting in January, placed on record their sympathy with the family of the late Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson and their great regard for him and deep appreciation of his important, and invaluable services to The Poetry Society. With his passing we realize poignantly and profoundly what The Poetry Society owes to its one time President. This supreme exponent of the art of vocal interpretation was attracted to the Society when it was formed about thirty years ago to promote, in the words of Matthew Arnold adopted as a motto, "a clearer, deeper sense of the best in poetry and of the strength and joy to be drawn from it," by encouraging the public and private reading and the use of it and developing the then neglected art of speaking verse, and he took an active, practical part in the practical attempt made to realize these objects. Without his recognition and support it is unlikely

that The Poetry Society, as the organization came to be known after its first year, could have been maintained. When a demand arose for qualified readers to represent the Society and for examinations in Diction and Verse-speaking, Sir Johnston laid down the policy and regulations, signed an important manifesto issued in 1911, defining the Society's intentions and explaining its concern for elocution and voice production as a means to an important end and acted as examiner at the auditions held on the behalf of the Society at the University of London. His delight at hearing the clear unaffected speech of London elementary school children was the subject of an appreciative sub-leader in *The Times*. When these examinations developed Sir Johnston continued to support them with his advice and authority and acted for many years at the culminating Gold Medal examinations, the candidates finding him a strict yet sympathetic judge, eager to help, insistent upon meticulous attention to the numerous apparently small details which go to make up the finished artist. What he urged then is applicable now to many who attempt to read and speak in public,—particularly the necessity for " avoiding that sinking feeling," " keeping their end up " and remembering that a whisper, when effectively produced, may be heard more clearly and further than a shout. One of his *bête noirs* was the neglect of the wh. sound which he was accustomed to illustrate by using examples. This distinguished actor was most insistent on the difference between lyrical and the dramatic ; in dealing with the former he condemned all gesture and physical movement and showed how the beauty and significance of a poem should and could be produced by vocal and facial expression only. His own several readings of *The Ancient Mariner* in particular, were wonderful displays of vocal artistry and the production of the glamour even more than the meaning of the poem. In consequence Sir Johnston was the obvious successor to Lord Coleridge in the Presidency of the Society, in his own person being the ideal representative of the Society's ideals and it is due to his invaluable sympathy and encouragement and unfailing co-operation that the Society has been most successful in meeting a particular need, and continuing to apply his principles, which have been faithfully observed and practised by his successors. The Poetry Society's examinations in verse-speaking and diction may be regarded as a permanent, living memorial to him. We realized his greatness on the personal side, too. Quiet, unaffected, undemonstrative, aloof, he could be relied on to discharge what he undertook, and that without fuss, ostentation or as a favour, and we particularly appreciated his rare trait of freedom from malice and pettiness, and of believing the best and not being prejudiced against the integrity of those with whom he worked.

Readers of THE POETRY REVIEW are invited to join the Byron Society in a reconstruction of Childe Harold's pilgrimage from Waterloo to Chillon in June : details from the Director of The Poetry Society.

POETRY TO-DAY.

IT is an extraordinary thing that the more disturbed and threatening the conditions of life, the louder the poets sing, like nightingales during an artillery bombardment. Of course there are birds other than nightingales, those, for example, which screech, croak, and hoot, but the fracas stimulates them all. It is quite obvious, if it had never been so before, that poetry provides an important safety-valve for the emotions.

What the coconut palm is materially to the Pacific islander, is poetry spiritually to many civilized human beings. Men have fed upon it, built shelters of it, cleansed themselves with it and got drunk upon it; carved its dead husks into complicated and frightful masks, buried their dead in shrouds of its ample leaves. It has shaded them from the heat, and exacted their most heartrending toil. It can provide a love-potion or a poison, a roof-tree or a weapon, a ship, a cradle, or a tomb. It can build a temple or a prison, and surround the one with a garden, the other with a desert.

Poetry is a creature so Promethean, and in the experience of man has assumed so many different shapes, each instinct with destiny, that for myself I find I regard each metamorphosis with anxious attention, with the half-unconscious conviction that to understand these changes is vitally necessary in some mysterious way. But of late its attitudes have become so strange, and even threatening, that some of us weary of the attempt to comprehend, and the natural inclination to look backwards has become intensified, with the result that poets and poetry-lovers have split into two main factions.

This has been inevitable in the nature of events, for the modernists take the view that those who are not for them are against them, and this even more in a political than in a poetical sense. We have learned to expect no tolerance from them; but we still feel, I hope, that they are entitled to tolerance from ourselves. It is to the lessons of the past that we look, in the true spirit of the traditionalist.

[An abstract from Miss Ruth Pitter's speech at the 29th birthday dinner of The Poetry Society on February 24th, 1938.]

What do we see, those of us who are so fond of looking into English poetry of the past, as into the face of a beloved grandmother? We see indeed monumental achievements, but these were once hated, ridiculed, or neglected innovations; we see features beautifully softened by time, but be sure they once had that sharp raw newness we deprecate now; we see "old, unhappy, far-off things," now lovely with an elegiac melancholy, but once the agonized expression of sufferings too sharp to be borne, and which yet had to be borne. We meet with lines that have become an integral part of our collective consciousness, carrying associations which are sacred, because they belong to our youth, and to many generations of youth; but these were once upstart effects, faithfully execrated by the conservatively-minded in whatever epoch they may have appeared;

> And when they list, their lean and flashy songs
> Grate on their scrannel pipes of wretched straw.

No effort of the will can transform the conservatively-minded into a neo-maniac. If we are traditionalist by nature, so we must remain, or be guilty of a damnable hypocrisy. I am not one of those who affect admiration for the latest thing out of fear, the fear of being thought stupid or a back number. On the contrary, it pains me to see people patiently trying to find some ground of admiration for work they evidently dislike. Why do they bother, if not out of vanity? If a poem is your kind of a good poem, you don't have to dissect out its claims to praise. You fall on its neck and embrace it.

But, on the other hand, I cannot bear to hear anything condemned just because it is new or different. The past shows us in innumerable instances that while the new is not always the good, that what is execrated to-day is often idolized to-morrow, and therefore that changing values are a dangerous target for our wits. Good critics of contemporary work are always rare, perfect ones do not exist, and it is both vain and useless to set ourselves up as judges of what is actually happening, if only for the reason that we seldom have sufficient evidence. If we do so exalt ourselves, we are attempting to usurp the function and the

dignity of the arch-critic, the least fallible of all, Time.

It is not possible to abstain altogether from criticism, for we must discriminate to live; but I should like to hear more often a tentative "Well, I don't like it myself," rather than a too positive "Infernal rubbish!" Let us remember that individual taste is a relative of relatives, and that the nearest approach to absolute truth on this, or any other matter, lies in that condensation of human experience which we know, and love, as tradition. Like the lady in the ballad, who was bidden to seize and keep fast hold of her enchanted lover, whatever the form he assumed, we must not allow our own prejudices to deceive us with regard to the development of our beloved art, though it appear as a lion or a bear, a serpent or a naked man, which last, as you will remember, was the worst of all to the modest lady.

One thing I will affirm; that I shall never be constrained by any fashion, or by any external compulsion, to renounce in principle the transcendental as an element in poetry, though I be condemned as a sentimentalist, a Platonist, a reactionary, or a traitor. And if the latest developments in poetry shall prove to be part of a true decadence, let us remember that no decline, no fall which is inherent in the rhythms of civilization can be arrested by reactionary activity. If this is our poetical autumn, then winter must come, and hope must be fixed in the inevitable if distant spring, whether we share in it or no.

RUTH PITTER.

FOR A TOWN BIRTHDAY

DO you remember the larks' voices?
They were our children's-thinking when we went
Persephone-wise, free in the fields in spring
And did not know we thought of anything.

Sometimes now, catching the horns' voices,
Chiming and crying on wet streets at night
I share that lorn tongue, those nostalgic fears,
But sweet and lark-pitched language scorns my ears.

E. RADCLIFFE BINNINGTON.

EPITAPH

MY heart's home is here
Away from fevered torment of your breast
Where earth's face is clear
And cool of evening dew is cool of rest.

Earth fails not nor dies,
A hundred winds and suns shall come again,
Infinity of skies
Are hers and springs not loved enough by men.

What love then is this
That gives a timeless beauty unreturned
By those who snatch a kiss
To feed their fire of life so soon outburned?

I lie here unseen
And peace that folds my weary limbs about
With dusky feel of green
Is peace no life was made to live without.

PHOEBE RAYNER.

RENAISSANCE

LOOK! as though frosted the meadows are, white with moonlight!
Only to live, only to love one hour as this, in its progress
A vision fallen upon the desertless spirit!
Only so richly to live, have year so bless!
As though for no other being had beauty ever, or change
Redeemed the world, been even thus sweetly translated
Into an hundred tongues of light and strange
Accents of sound and colour, early freighted
Out of a moonbright evening. Oh!
Not for us in striving, tearing, wearing,
But lifting eyes suddenly out of darkness and seeing
Beauty that never was in earth or heaven before, blow,
Flow and scatter, frost-fill the glittering air, faring
Into the heart that loves as never, never loved other being!

E. DOREEN IDLE.

RETURN

I HAVE done with the world,
With the dust and the dross,
With the clay.
I have done with the blare,
And the hollow-eyed stare,
With the gloss,
And the loud-mouthed display
I have done.

I have done with the simpering show of the world,
With the panoplied mime,
And the painted leer;
With the sauntering pageant that ends in a smear
At the shudder of time;
With the day's little triumphs that turn into pain,
With the world and its stain
I have done.

Let me turn once again to my home on the hill,
Where the cow ambles by;
To the tree where it opens its heart to the sky,
To the tree that is still,
And the leaf that is dead,
And the laughter I sold for a handful of bread;
To the wind's wanton chide,
And the hand at my side
Of a comforting one.

I shall walk in the ways of the bee once again,
Where the sparrow hangs his nest,
And the stranger-bird calling his far-winging troop
Stays for rest;
And the wide-wheeling bat flutters shyly at close.
I shall watch o'er the bud till it spreads to a rose,
And water the flower till my own flower shall droop,
And be gone.

LEWIS SOWDEN.

Johannesburg.

ADVENTURE

THE moon is golden
Over Eden
The leaves hang lightly on the trees
Flowers fading, Autumn staining
The Lord is coming with his keys.

Quickly enter
The adventure
Soon the wind will break the stems
Insect dozing, Summer closing
Touch the white of Winter's hems.

You remember
Last September
Heard the click of garden gate
God still dances, take your chances
Another time will be too late.

The moon is golden
On a garden
Still the roses throw their scent
Run, immortal, through the portal
Lest your living soul be spent.

M. E. MITCHELL.

TREASURE

FOLDED in my heart they lie,
Heathered hill and splendid sky,
Reed and ripple-girdled lake—
I look on them, asleep, awake,
And shall until I die.

Then as June unseals the rose
Heaven shall my dream disclose
And I shall wear it dimly there
As one in June remembers where
An April violet bows.

A. M. WALKER.

A. E. HOUSMAN: A CRITICAL STUDY

READER and critic can expect no more original material—either in the form of biography or verse. Mr. Laurence Housman's memoir completes the biographical work of Mr. A. S. F. Gow and Mr. Grant Richards and the memorial number of *The Bromsgrovian*; the poems selected by Mr. Housman from his brother's manuscripts and published in the memoir are the "last";[1] in accordance with the instruction of the will the remaining unpublished poems are to be or have been destroyed. A. E. Housman never weakened in his determination to "build himself a monument" out of only the least flawed of his achievements; and he was exceptional in building two monuments. Of the enduring nature of the scholarship Housman expressed some doubt, perhaps surprising, in the last volume of his Manilius; doubting not the quality of his achievement but the length of posterity for classical studies. Now that the material is complete, we read or re-read the inscriptions and test the stones of the verse; not forgetting, in our ignorance of it, that the monument of scholarship is organically related to the monument of verse.

> They say my verse is sad: no wonder;
> Its narrow measure spans
> Tears of eternity, and sorrow,
> Not mine, but man's.

The blackbird sings of futility in the ploughman's ear; and in March the storm-cock starts the "rusted wheel of things"; adolescence fights sorrow with bat and pad; the soldier deserts; men are hanged; Maurice lies still with the knife of his brother in his side; with opportunity desire fails; death or disappointment parts friends—although friendship is triumphant at the gate of hell; lovers are unfaithful; the true lover cuts his throat by the side of his beloved; the hope of morning is vain and in the night the fist beats upon stone; the laws of God and man are strong in their foolishness—and there is no sug-

[1] These later "revelations" justify this addition to the "Tribute to A.E.H." by D. Binny and the study of "The Art of A.E.H." by A. L. Percival in our issue for July-August, 1936.

gestion that the laws of man are alterable; the fault is primal: to live is to endure or to train for ill.

> . . . since the world has still
> Much good, but much less good than ill,
> And while the sun and moon endure
> Luck's a chance, but trouble's sure,
> I'd face it as a wise man would,
> And train for ill and not for good.

The poems, in the perversity of the despair and bitter endurance, voice little of the "good". They are the dry symbol of the negative half only of the practical philosophy implied in Housman's label for himself. In answer to a correspondent Housman once wrote:

> "I am not a pessimist but a pejorist (as George Eliot said she was not an optimist but a meliorist); and that is owing to my observation of the world, not to personal circumstances."

He also wrote:

> "I respect the Epicureans more than the Stoics, but I am myself a Cyrenaic."

Housman, because of his expression of despair, is sometimes named beside Hardy. Hardy said of his creed: "'If way to the Better there be, it exacts a full look at the Worst': that is to say, by the exploration of reality, and its frank recognition stage by stage along the survey, with an eye to the best consummation possible: briefly, evolutionary meliorism." Housman never attempted to explore reality; his poetry was an anæsthesis,—we hope to show in what sense; as such it has no poetic conception of life or tragic understanding. Hardy's intention varied. But whatever Hardy's success in that exploration of reality which is the means to the "soul's betterment and the body's also," his main impulse was of a different order; and in his acceptance of the changeability of man's mood he gave utterance to hours of spiritual triumph.

In *The Name and Nature of Poetry* Housman said that the most simple poetry may differ from prose "only in its metrical form, and be superior to prose only in the superior comeliness of that form itself, and the superior terseness which usually goes along with it." As an example Housman quoted Daniel's

Come, worthy Greek, Ulysses, come,
Possess these shores with me:
The winds and seas are troublesome,
And here we may be free.
Here may we sit and view their toil
That travail in the deep,
And joy the day in mirth the while,
And spend the night in sleep.

With such poetry, however, as a stanza (the sixth) from Logan's *To the Cuckoo* or the following lines of Johnson, a "tinge of emotion," Housman suggested, has entered into poetry:

His virtues walked their narrow round,
Nor made a pause, nor left a void;
And sure the Eternal Master found
The single talent well employed.

The flicker of emotion arises with a slight development of poetic statement. Johnson's lines contain a graceful metaphor. In Logan's stanza simple language is used more freshly than in Daniel's; the wistfulness of the comparison is in the pulse of the words; it is also partly hidden in the comparison itself:

Sweet bird, thy bower is ever green,
Thy sky is ever clear;
Thou hast no sorrow in thy song,
No winter in thy year.

Further Housman did not go at that stage of his discourse; and in a consideration of his own poetry there is no need to go further; it might be said no further than Daniel's stanza.

"Distance" is the vital attribute of certain forms of poetry; in no moment, as we read, is the material close to the centre of the mind. A poem may be altogether a matter of direct import and set feelings associated with humble elements; its poetic distance is wrought by the directness. Such poetic distance is not necessarily a function of simplicity. Language may be simple and yet a fluid poetic experience—for example, Hardy's poem:

Will's at the dance in the Club-room below,
Where the tall liquor-cups foam;
I on the pavement up here by the Bow,
Wait, wait, to steady him home.

Will and his partner are treading a tune,
Loving companions they be;
Willy, before we were married in June,
Said he loved no one but me;

Said he would let his old pleasures all go
Ever to live with his Dear.
Will's at the dance in the Club-room below,
Shivering I wait for him here.

The poignancy of the situation lives behind the lines; as soon as the poignancy is explicitly emphasised—in the last line—the whole effect is immediately weakened. What use is made of the simplicity? this is the important question. Housman's poetry communicates no more than a first literal meaning, and metaphors, when present, are flat and simple; or, as in *When first my way to fair I took*, the words have a further meaning:

Now times are altered; if I care
To buy a thing, I can;
The pence are here and here's the fair,
But where's the lost young man?

But any second meaning, intellectual and emotional in so far as emotion clings to the thought, is as fixed as the primary meaning.

The language is made up of a thin purity such as is seen in *Loveliest of trees, the cherry now:* simple colloquial phrases; metaphorical clichés; symbolic and emotional clichés; words of threadbare poetic diction; the vocabulary of sham masculinity and sham pastorality. The verse exceeds the innate distance of a poetic form. Falsity through diction is naturally least when the language is at its purest. Tricks of proximity add to the falsity. Utterances that have a tone of truth are, for example, juxtaposed with elements of the sham masculinity,—as in the lyric, *The chestnut casts his flambeaux, and the flowers*; poetical elements are mingled or juxtaposed with more realistic elements:

The fairies break their dances
And leave the printed lawn,
And up from India glances
The silver sail of dawn.

The candles burn their sockets,
The blinds let through the day,
The young man feels his pockets
And wonders what's to pay.

Sentimentality was avoided by the perfection of pattern, —of stanza, syllable, and rhyme; by the perfect skill in choice of simple "fixities and definites."

In his craft and language Housman was not a figure of any poetic revolt. Any negative influences—the "clattering noise" of Swinburne may have been one—were, so to speak, internecine. His achievement is a bare refinement, a last quintessence of Victorian poetry. To read in the memoir that Housman admired the work of Christina Rossetti is not surprising. The graves, the cypresses, the russet floors, the laurels, the bowers of bay have about them a Pre-Raphaelite air. Concerning influences Housman wrote in the autobiographical letter:

"'Reader of the Greek Anthology' is not a good name for me. Of course I have read it . . . but with no special heed; and my favourite Greek poet is Aeschylus. No doubt I have unconsciously been influenced by the Greeks and Latins, but I was surprised when critics spoke of my poetry as 'classical'. Its chief source of which I am conscious are Shakespeare's songs, the Scottish Border ballads, and Heine."

Classical in form—if not in material.

The compulsion of the poems is mainly an accentual one: the reticent arrangement of vowel and consonant and the more marked euphony of alliteration and rhyme are subordinate to the strict metre. Variations in metre are usually single inversions. In view of the sustained simplicity of form, *Easter Hymn*, from *More Poems*, is interesting:

If in that Syrian garden, ages slain,
You sleep, and know not you are dead in vain,
Nor even in dreams behold how dark and bright
Ascends in smoke and fire by day and night
The hate you died to quench and could but fan,
Sleep well and see no morning, son of man.

> But if, the grave rent and the stone rolled by,
> At the right hand of majesty on high
> You sit, and sitting so remember yet
> Your tears, your agony and bloody sweat,
> Your cross and passion and the life you gave,
> Bow hither out of heaven and see and save.

In its more varied metre, cadence of passionate tenderness, it is unique among Housman's poems. The sentences are intricate; weight is built up by delay in their completion; parts are joined by repetition. The poem moves as a whole. Clothed in a more generous rhythm the words break into vitality. The poem has for its subject religious realities or symbols—but here subject-matter is of second importance; in reading the mind is more conscious of the metrical flow and tension of delay. Through these we experience something of the liberation of more intense poetry. Metrical strictness is an essential factor in poetic distance; the fullness of Hardy's *A Wife Waits* mostly depends upon its approach to speech-rhythms.

As a scholar Housman was a scientist; literary criticism, since he felt unable to go beyond personal opinion and judge with impersonal insight, was foreign territory to him; there was only one subject which he thought he could treat "with profit because it was also scientific"—the Artifice of Versification. The scientist in Housman wanted to state, as part of the foundation of his criticism, the literal meaning of poetry, although statement of it was not required; at the same time he knew this was misguided and often impossible. The startling "nonsense", the word he used in dealing with profounder poetry than his first examples, arose out of the conflict. An "intellectual content" was present only when thought was overt; and a poem that had no intellectual content was "nonsense". The "purest" poetry is indeed "nonsense", or elusive in meaning, having no thought but only "embryo ideas"; and "nonsense" is an essential of all profound poetry; the truth was expressed characteristically. But, as Housman himself suggested at one point, an intellectual content cannot be separated from the "poetry" or a poetic con-

tent; without the thought the poetry does not exist and no poem's meaning has "power of itself to move, even if the poetry were not there". The term is only valid if the mind—in analysing a single poem and in considering poetry as a whole—keeps it within the "poetry". When we say "intellectual content" we refer to that which strikes the more superficial part of our mind; we name a focus of attention. At one extreme the poetry is thoughtless sense; at the other, as we have seen, the poetry is plain meaning; between these extremes an "intellectual content" or some measure of thought is in the poetry but the poetry is not the thought. Emphasis on the narrow obvious meaning and a confusion between the results of reading and subsequent examination led Housman to one curious oversight. Housman said of the line "Nymphs and shepherds, dance no more,"—

> "What is it that can draw tears, as I know it can, to the eyes of more readers than one? What in the world is there to cry about? Why have the mere words the physical effect of pathos when the sense of the passage is blithe and gay? I can only say, because they are poetry, and find their way to something in man which is obscure and latent, something older than the present organization of his nature. . . ."

In examining Housman overlooked the words "no more" and their general association of pathos; words which had full effect in the act of reading.

In his desire for precision and scientific truth did Housman hate poetry? Professor Garrod, in *The Profession of Poetry* (1929), suggested that he did; that Housman was a scholar because he hated poetry and all parts of life connected with it; finding in scholarship an anodyne for wounds at the heart of life; that he hated poetry sufficiently so that he would not "take pains enough to deal truly with his material". As a man may watch himself resist suffering and find cold satisfaction as a self-spectator, so Housman may have found a haven in scientific precision. The directness and craft were the mode of the scientific scholar. The falsity was born less out of hate than inability; certainly not out of insufficient pains. The serious poems written in his teens and at Oxford were prophetic; and

the nonsense verse written during those years and later were of the same activity—virtuosity.

" . . . My poetry, so far as I could make out, sprang chiefly from physical conditions, such as a relaxed sore throat during my most prolific period," Housman wrote in the succinct autobiographical letter in the memoir. The " pint of beer " and " pit of the stomach " of the Leslie Stephen lecture have become household words,—and Housman meant them to; and the " continuous excitement " of the preface to *Last Poems* cannot now surprise or tempt conjecture. Housman no doubt enjoyed the satisfaction of provocativeness—and revenge upon an incorrigible obscurity—in voicing the celebrated description; in calling poetry a secretion, in so far as the first stage of its production is involuntary; and in presenting his list of physical symptoms. Stress on the more unmistakable and behaviouristic effects is in keeping with the " nonsense ".

What is remarkable in the creative process is the minimal connection with experience, and, when actuality has been of direct initial importance, the withdrawal; and *A.J.J.*, a poem in which closeness is attempted, makes pathetic reading with its impotent clichés and expletives. The desire or struggle was to make a perfect pattern out of simple " fixities "; a conception of this pattern, it is understood from *The Name and Nature of Poetry*, came not before a line or verse was written, but only after one of these had been formed; and it seems that the indifferent health brought release to the elements. In the minimal connection and rigid withdrawal no originality could appear; the nearest approach to it is in the purity of language. Housman mentioned Burns and Wordsworth as poets whose poetry came into being in a similar fashion —with " sudden and unaccountable emotion." He quoted Burns:

> " I have two or three times in my life composed from the wish rather than the impulse, but I never succeeded to any purpose."

Surely most poets write from impulse, not from wish; although the wish is conducive to poetic spontaneity.

The character of the impulse, the depth or habit behind it, has to be considered. The creativeness of Burns and Housman have similarity; Housman's creativeness cannot be compared with Wordsworth's. Wordsworth postulated the habit of imaginative contemplation; the activity which springs out of the imaginative habit and ends in a poem may, of course, be as capricious and as unrelated to a given experience as the activitiy which is consummated in a humbler poem. In both creation and reading the mind alternates, wavers between an æsthetic condition, in so far as there is little or no sense of reality, and a condition in which there is definite consciousness of reality (or falsity); the habit behind poetry such as Housman's is in the realm of everyday apprehension; instead of being moulded into growing unity the elements of experience remain separate; and any reference to reality, in creation or reading, is in terms of the everyday apprehension.

> They say my verse is sad . . .
> This is for all ill-treated fellows
> Unborn and unbegot,
> For them to read when they're in trouble
> And I am not.

And when the ill-treated fellows read it in what fashion does it lighten their sorrows and dry or set free their tears of eternity? One of the statements of the "painful episode" of 1933 was this:

> "I am convinced that most readers, when they think that they are admiring poetry, are deceived by inability to analyse their sensations, and that they are really admiring, not the poetry of the passage before them, but something else in it, which they like better than poetry."

The fervent Wordsworthians of the nineteenth century, Housman pointed out in illustration, were not "noticeably sensitive" to their idol's poetry as language; and "devout women" do not praise Keble for his poetry. The majority of readers may find only what they wish; on the other hand the poet may allow them to find what they wish; the more likely is this the simpler the poetry. What are the dangers of the faithlessness, the latent and inverted sentimentalism? Human experience has its hours of self-pity;

hours when tenderness cannot be achieved and any further sign for despair is grimly welcomed. The effect may be as false as the sentiment of the dedicatory poem; the ill-treated fellows sink further into the bitter darkness. And if endurance is the word, how much further from defeat is their will? One way of testing the value of poetry is by its power of dispersing the soul's hate.

Housman's eternity was the eternity of duration, not the eternity of Blake,—for Housman the "purest" of poets. Had inner knowledge been different Housman would have known another impersonality; and been careless of the monument. Rigid care was the only means: supreme skill or talent is as durable as any mark of the radical soul.

THERESA ASHTON.

THE BELEAGUERED

THE best desires of men are firmly bound
Within a puzzled skein of circumstance,
Where many cords are pulling. Hate enwound,
The men who love must feed that hate, perchance.
They build vile things to gain their daily bread—
Stark instruments of horror; gun and shell;
Swift aeroplanes; and bombs that scatter dread;
With all the Devil's panoply of hell.

Yet few are urged by hate's insane demand
To render pain to others. They regard
Their neighbours overseas with kindly eyes.
They spend their lives within a web; command
No power to break its meshes, to discard
That tantalizing snare of evil guise.

ARTHUR LYNNFORD-SMITH.

"It would be hard to persuade a city man that THE POETRY REVIEW is a better investment than *The Financial Times*, and he would never believe that a new poem would (if he could read it) give greater pleasure than a new car. But it is so," says the *Brentford Times*.

PASTORAL

(*Founded on the 1st Idyll by Theocritus*)

Though the age of Theocritus has passed, the scenes where he sang remain, the glamour that stirred him, the beauty, the simplicity, the music in all nature.

The shepherds who sing, in the opening of this poem, though they are but shadowy figures fading, with their brief song, into the background whence they came, are more or less typical of the peasantry, who still live in such regions ;—redolent of the Earth, bound to her by intimate bonds,—simple folk in whom memory stirs as intuition, over whom the hills around, the valleys, woods and waters weave an irresistible spell, whispering to them magical tales, legends, time can never destroy nor science disprove,—mysteries of Mother Earth to which we, of a sophisticated age, for wisdom's sake, must needs return, needs seek an ever fresh initiation.

1ST SHEPHERD

Sweet is the sound of yonder whispering pines,
Whose murmurs by the flower-fringed well,
With thy sweet pipings
Now harmonious swell,
The scene with softest melodies enringing :

2ND SHEPHERD

But sweeter still,
The music of the waterfall,
Around whose giddy swirl,
The rainbows, great and small,
Are gathered ; held
Beneath the joyful spell
Of thy sweet singing.

1ST SHEPHERD

Then gentle shepherd,
(Listen, it were well,)
Let us of music,
Drink, awhile, our fill,
And 'mongst the tamarisks,
Upon yon sloping hill,
Thy flute in hand,
Near by a sparkling rill,
Pipe unto my singing,
The while the Hours,
Their sunlit flight
Across the scene, are winging.

Leisurely, we'll weave
Some old time simple tales,
And when the twilight falls,
Bid each a blithe farewell,
Till Dawn steps forth
Across the dewy hills,
And wakes the world.

They pipe and sing together

" Past is the noontide now,
Pan's rest is o'er:
Priapus and the fountain fairies list'ning,
Where the splashing waters are,
The drowsy Hours in chorus singing."

" Surely 'tis the home of happy mortals here!
Sunbeams glistening in the waters pure,
The Elms cool shade, the fruitful olive ;—there,
The jewellèd flowers,
The violet and the asphodel,
The celandine, narcissus pale,
And scented galingale : their phial
Of fragrance, rich and rare,
In lavish showers,
All squandered there,
While spirits of the earth and air,
Enamoured of the shining Hours,
Disport themselves,
Or lost awhile in converse fair,
Conceal them in secluded bowers."

" So sing we as the brooklet flows!
So sing we as the soft breeze blows,
Until the sun sinks low,
The air grows chill,
The daylight fails,
And glow of rose,
The scene in mellow splendour veils ;
Shadows of the evening fall,
And Hesperus,

Across the sun-reft hills,
A pale gleam throws,
A wreath of dreams,
A lucent, silvery pall."

Now all the world is stilled,
Only the grey owl calls, from grove to grove,
His wild cry shrilling;
Or, in some leafy cove,
His passion through the darkness thrilling,
The nightingale
Pours forth his melancholy soul.

Entranced,
Close held beneath the Night's dim thrall,
Our hearts with joy now swell.
" All things seem full of soul," we sigh,
Stillness made audible;
While eastwards o'er the dreaming vale,
The moon's pale aureole,
Beneath a mist enveiled,
Grows slowly visible.
Dare we then break the spell,
Ever so softly call; . . . .

Trembles each syllable
Winged through the tranquil air,
Whispered so soft and low,
Our whispered, eager prayer.

" Spirits of the dew-drenched dell,
Give ear! And ye that dwell
Amid the starry spheres,
Now draw ye near;—
Let us your singing hear!
Ye Dryads and the Nymphs we love so well,
Sing! Sing!
Let ye your voices through the night air ring,
A mead of praise unto the high gods bringing!"

. . . . .

Music through the darkness thrills,
Soft as Zephyrus, 'neath the fir woods sighing,
Or summer clouds across the azure flying,
Or little rills, through valleys purling,
Or hairbells swaying on the windy hills :

Music ! through the darkness swelling,
Clear, mellifluous, rhythmic, flowing,
Music, mystic, as a soft breath blowing !
Songs of mortals far excelling.

. . . . .

" Where were ye " ; (the nymphs 'gan singing,)
" When lorn Daphnis,
Spurned Priapus,
Who would comfort him ?
Answer Dryads from the woodlands dim ! "

" Not by the stream of Anapus," they sing,
Nor yet in Peneus' cool dell,
Nor dwelt we in valleys of Pindus,
Nor drank we of Acis' deep well ;

In shades of the forest were dwelling
Each one, where we dwelt, as of yore,
And there, with songs ever swelling,
We told of the woodland lore ;
Nor heard we the sound of Earth's sorrow,
Nor recked we of Earth's sore pain ;
The legends of gods and immortals,
We sang them again and again,

Till the forests and mountains re-echoed,
And the woodlands rang in refrain ;
But never, through all our singing,
Entered the voice of pain !

Cried the nymphs ;—
" Forlorn then Daphnis wailing " !

For him the jackals of the desert called.
(Spirits of the air have told,)—
For him the wild wolves howled ;
The Lion lamented,
The bulls of the valleys bewailed him !

Of mortals came none to befriend him ?

The Neatherds and shepherds came,
(Sang the nymphs ; and sadly then,)
Asked what ailed him ;—
Futile was their pity, then,
Unavailing.

DRYADS

Heard the denizens of Heaven,
Those fair beings, pure and shining,
Daphnis, in the valleys, mourning,
Daphnis all forlorn, repining ?

SPIRITS OF THE AIR

Hermes from Olympian spaces,
From the far-off fields of Heaven,
Heard him, downwards hastening,
Cried, " Who lov'st thou,
Why lamenting ? "

But he answered not,
Nor turned to greet him,
O'er his sorrow, silence keeping.

Cried the god, " Unhappy Daphnis,
Lo a maid, by glade and fountain,
Through the valleys, over mountains
Seeks thee, laggard, loves thee dearly ;—
Say what sorrow, cruel, tormenting,
Frets thy youthful spirit so ?
And repenting of thy folly,
Take her and thy grief forego ! "

Still he answered not:
In silence, stubborn, hid his woe.

What were all Love's crazed advances,
He had spurned them!
What cared he for that poor maiden,
How she sought him, craved, pursued him,
Suffered unrequited passion;
For he loved another maiden,
Loved her dearly, but in vain.

. . . . .

Thus he flaunted Aphrodité,
(So the ancient legends run,)
Dared the wrath of holy Cypris,
She, the far-famed Queen of passion;
Courted, careless, her dread doom;
Wayward, unrepentant,
Set his will against her own.

Then, it was that she bethought her,
In an hour by none fore-known,
Not in pity, but avenging,
She, unto the love-lorn youth—would come.

Earthwards hastening,
Wrath concealing,
(Anger in her bosom flaming,)
"Daphnis," cried, (As she bent o'er him),
"List, dear youth, for thy swift healing,
Wilt thou not in me confide?
Soft, my breast, for thine enfolding,
Spurn me not, nor dare to chide!
Thou art mine, beloved mortal,
Mine, whatever grief betide!"

All his tears, her smiles illumined,
Sparkled as the dew his eyes;
While with him she gently pleaded
Mingling laughter with her sighs.

Stubborn still, he darkly brooded;
Never knew he, in his grieving,
He, Love's awful Queen, defied,
Thinking only of the maiden
And his love despised.

So the goddess, vengeful, proved him;
Crafty, strove she e'en, to woo him,
Bring about his subjugation,
Bring him sterner condemnation,
Bend his will unto her own.

. . . . . .

By the light of stars she saw him;
Saw his beauty strangely gleaming;
Drew her nearer,
Till the herdsman,
All her wiles his heart deceiving,
Only power, resistless feeling,
Dared to lift to her his eyes.

All her flashing glory smote him,
Struck his heart with sudden terror; . . .
Was this then the great Olympian,
She, the ageless, dread tormentor,
Tyrant over gods and men?

Rose she as a pillar o'er him,
Fateful, an eternal symbol,
Haloed by the stars of Heaven,
Mist of silver light diffusing,
"Did'st thou boast," in wrath she cried,
"Love's avenging, never dreaming,—
Thou wouldst throw great Love a fall?
'Tis the hour of mine avenging,
'Tis thyself Love casts in thrall!"

As billows of the ocean, storm-rolled,
Surged her voice across his soul:—
"Ere the harvest moon shall wane,

'Neath my curse shalt thou be slain ! "—
Bitterly he moaned then :—
Wailed aloud ;—
"Would that fate my doom could fend !
Thee, alas, too late I know,
Cause of all my bitter woe ! . . .
Aphrodité ! It is thou ! . . .
Go ! No more behold me,
Turn from me thy cruel eye,
On the uplands leave me lying,
'Neath thy will condemned to die ! "

Still she lingered gazing on him,
Raptured by his youthful beauty,—
" Get thee hence, revengeful goddess,"
Once again to her he cried,
(Then mocking softly—half aside,)
" Where the oak trees fling their shadows
Idly o'er thy gentle slumbers,
Where the amorous breezes sigh !
Get thee hence, relentless Cypris,
Where, the rivers, gliding slowly
Through the lowlands laughing hie.
Legend says thou hast a lover.
Speed to him on wings of joy !
Go ! as once before, embrace him,
Where the fruitful furrows lie ! "

Cypris as a phantom faded,
Vanished, as a fleeting Day-dream ;
Only wistful, wandering breezes
Whispered sadly 'mongst the grasses,
Only stars wheeled overhead.

Ceased anon his poignant pleading.
Chill his brow, and slow
His breathing ;—
Dimmed his dark and lustrous eyes,
" Love has conquered me ! " he cried ;—

Then sank upon the purple heather,
While the Night, with dusky pinions,
Fanned him into peaceful slumbers,
And the Hours crept slowly by;
Lingered longer they to wake him,
Turned his gaze towards the heavens,
Turned his gaze towards the plain;
Stirred within him sweet remembrance,
Scattering Love's mist of pain.

Bringing back the joys of childhood,
Starry flowers for him unfading,
Perfumed wreaths, wherewith to crown him,
Garlands of unclouded days.

So he listened, calm, contented,
As a child beneath the sunshine,
By some elfin tale beguiled;—
Till cold sorrow,—
Envious of remembered joys,
Veiled the sunshine in his eyes,
As a mist from shadowed valleys
All the pleasant landscape hides,

And he whispered:
"Lead me down to Lethé's waters,
Lead me where cool shadows lie,
Restful, on the rippling surface;—
Where the wavelets softly sigh,
Lapping, rustling 'mongst the rushes,
Ere they into silence die."

Paused, then faintly;—
"'Tis the isle of Dreams I see,
Gleaming in the hazy distance;
'Tis the sunlit isle I see,
Thither would I gladly hasten,
Live forever, blithe and free.

" Never there shall frore winds freeze me,
Never there grief's storms destroy,
Nor shall Love's fell darts assail me,
Nor false fires my youth decoy."

Lost awhile amid his dreaming,
Silent lay the stricken herdsman.
He had almost reached the river,
Bathed his feet in its still waters ;
Yet he halted, wistful ever,
Mindful of the Earth his mother,
Fresh emotion in him stirring
Memories of things forgotten,
Once again to him returning,
Melodies in childhood heard,
All the glamour of the summer,
Winter's joy, and springtime's rapture,
And the comradeship of beast and bird.

" Surely Earth, the mighty Giver,
Spells can weave and charms," he sighed,—
" Charms to heal a mortal's sorrow,—
Blessings that shall ever bide."

(Soft his voice in whispers floated,
Gentle as the rustling reeds,
When Zephyr in an hour of leisure,
Shakes down showers of ripened seeds.)

" Cool the breeze," he faintly murmured,
" Cool it blows from perfumed seas,
" While the stars gleam bright above me. . . .
Spells are these my Mother weaves,
Charms to soothe and bless me these."

Paused he then as though in musing :
Then he raised him ;
Earth herself his strength sustaining ;
Cast his gaze upon the mountains,

Cast his gaze towards the seas,
Scanned, with love, the distant valleys,
Strained his ears to hear the fountains,
Called the creatures that had loved him
Casting thought of grief behind him.

" Fare ye well, ye wolves and jackals,
Fare ye well, ye bears," he cried.
" Never to your caves returning,
Shall ye find young Daphnis near.
He is going, stealing from you,
When the day-star gleaming yonder,
Beckons you to leave your hiding ;—
Bids you to the lowlands hie
There to drink the cooling waters,
Ere the herdsmen and their cattle,
Wander to the river side."

" Fare ye well, ye streams and rivers,
Arethusa, sparkling fountain,
Shimmering, glimmering heart's delight ;—
Fare ye well, ye rushing waters,
Over pebbles, rocks and boulders,
Leaping, foaming out of sight ;
I am going . . . going from ye . . .
Listen ! Hear me say, Good night."

Then he drooped . . . and faintly,
Raised his hands towards the Heavens,
Where the mountains of the legends
Cast them towards the constellations,
Mingling with the starry sky.
Cried he,
" Pan ! O hear me ! Pan, the mighty !
Leave the dwelling of Lycaes,
Leave the gardens of Maenalus,
Leave the tomb of famed Helicé.
To the Isle Sicilian haste thee,
To the herdsman who would greet thee ! "

Called again in accents failing,
" Pan ! great Pan ! a gift I'd give thee,
This fair pipe, so fine in moulding . . .
Tones of honeyed sweetness breathing ;—
Hasten, o'er the dew-drenched mountains,
Swiftly hasten !
Spun the thread the fates assigned me.
Life so bitter sweet is fled,—
Shadows round my path are falling,
Shades of night my spirit thralling : . . .
Earth grows dim . . .
Cruel Love is calling . . .
Cold and dark is death's lone stream."

. . . . .

So he ceased, nor knew
That Pan had heard him ;
Op'ed the pearly gates of dawning,
Stepped across the dews of morning,
Ta'en his pipe, and softly fluting,
As the wind, when night is passing,
Played a dirge, a drear lamenting
O'er the mountains, through the valleys,
All along the river's edge,
And the lone shore,
Where the waves moan, wailing
Daphnis dead.

So, though years since then have fled,
When spring's laughter turns to weeping,
And the summer fades to winter,
And the flowers have drooped their heads,
One may hear them sadly singing,
Voices of the plain and mountain,
All the voices of the forest,
Sea and river, spring and fountain,—
Pan upon his pipe still shrilling,
Weeping over Daphnis dead.

VIOLET RAWNSLEY.

Anacapri.

HOPKINS AND BRIDGES ON TREES

ARE we likely to learn anything about a poet from his attitude towards trees? I have considered a large number in this respect, and with most of them the answer would be "No." Among the exceptions are the two that will concern us here,—both poets of importance, and, though very different in most respects, fairly close friends.

I wonder how many readers of *The Testament of Beauty* have noticed a passage beginning:

> "when the young poet my companion in study
> and friend of my heart refused a peach at my hands,
> he being then a housecarl in Loyala's menie,
> 'twas that he fear'd the savor of it, and when he waived
> his scruple to my banter, 'twas to avoid offence."

The incident (referred to by Hopkins in his letters) is remembered by Bridges after about fifty years, and is used for pressing his point that "repudiation of pleasure is a reasoned folly of imperfection." Here, at the outset, is a tree that had significance for both of them; and the Jesuit probably never forgave himself for behaving for once like a "limber liquid youth" who "Yields tender as a pushed peach."[1]

Hopkins, in one of his letters, says to Bridges:

> "As air, melody, is what strikes me most in music, and design in painting, so design, pattern or what I am in the habit of calling 'inscape,' is what I above all aim at in poetry."

And so it is the inscape of nature,—the pattern which makes every fragment of creation, every "bead of being", individual and unique,—that most interests him:

> "Looking at the leaves from underneath you saw every wave in every twig . . . and to the hangers and flying sprays it restored to the eye the inscapes they had lost."—"Spanish chestnuts: their inscape bold, jutty, somewhat oak-like."[2]

Closely allied to this is his conception of "instress", the particular effect which an object may have upon a particular person. When, for instance, he notes in his *Journal* the

[1] *The Bugler's First Communion*, written three years before this incident.
[2] From *The Note-books*, published 1937.

various trees on an estate that attracted him and their peculiarities, including

> " Tall larches . . . a wych-elm, also a beech, both of these with ivory-white bark pied with green moss : there was an instress about this spot " ;

he seems to be conscious both of the special atmosphere of the place and of that atmosphere charged with a special significance for himself.

One does not have to read far in his verse or prose to discover how intensely interested he was in trees. In an essay written (probably for Walter Pater) while he was still at Oxford, nearly the whole argument is illustrated by an analysis of the form of a chestnut leaf; the sketches he made of trees from time to time show a blending of the impressionistic glimpse-of-the-whole with the pre-Raphaelite love of detail; his *Journals* are crammed with remarkable observations on trees and parts of them (observation is only selection); while in his poems he frequently chooses, with the instinct of genius, some hauntingly powerful and precise epithet. Instead of writing

> " The mountain-ash
> No eye can overlook when mid a grove
> Of yet unfaded trees she lifts her head
> Decked with autumnal berries that outshine
> Spring's richest blossoms,"

he gives a touch, " the beadbonny ash that sits over the burn," and no eye *can* overlook it. Or it may be a " wind-beat white-beam," " airy abeles set on a flare," " mealed-with-yellow-sallows." Perhaps he would call our attention to " these goldnails and their gay links that hang along a lime," or " fresh fire-coal chestnut-falls," or " dogeared hazels " ; but whatever it is

> " We are leafwhelmed somewhere with the hood
> Of some branchy bunchy bushybowered wood "—

which is just what we should be. All this may appear (to use his own words) " barbarous in beauty " ; yet it is beauty nevertheless—for some.

Cowper once wrote a tree elegy beginning

> " The poplars are felled ; farewell to the shade
> And the whispering sound of the cool colonade."

Hopkins treats the same theme a hundred years later:

"My aspens dear, whose airy cages quelled,
Quelled or quenched in leaves the leaping sun,
All felled, felled, are all felled;
Of a fresh and following folded rank
Not spared, not one
That dandled a sandalled
Shadow that swam or sank
On meadow and river and wind-wandering weed-winding bank."

Then, a few lines further, the fine sensitiveness of:

"Since country is so tender
To touch, her being so slender
That, like this sleek and seeing ball
But a prick will make no eye at all,
Where we, even when we mean
To mend her we end her,
When we hew or delve:
After-comers cannot guess the beauty been."

Nor should we pass over such passages as these from the *Journals*:—"Chestnuts in bloom look like big-seeded strawberries"; of cedars:

"I found the bark smelt in the sun and not in the shade and I fancied too this held even of the smell it shed in the air," "Our cedars which had a warp upwards in the flats of leaf, in getting their new green turn and take a soft and beautiful warp downwards"; "I looked at some delicate flying shafted ashes . . . there was one especially of single sonnetlike inscape . . . between which the sun sent straight bright slenderish panes of silvery sunbeams down the slant towards the eye and standing above an unkept field stagged with patchy yellow heads of ragwort."

That is one of his many mentions of ashes; here is his best (a fragment):

"Not of all my eyes see, wandering on the world,
Is anything a milk to the mind so, so sighs deep
Poetry to it, as a tree whose boughs break in the sky.
Say it is ash-boughs: whether on a December day and furled
Fast or they in clammyish lashtender combs creep
Apart wide or new-nestle at heaven most high.
They touch heaven, tabour on it; how their talons sweep
The smouldering enormous winter welkin! May
Mells blue and snow white through them, a fringe and fray
Of greenery: it is old earth's groping towards the steep
Heaven whom she childs us by."

It was Bridges' thesis that

> " Man's happiness, his flaunting honey'd flower of soul,
> is his loving response to the wealth of Nature.
> Beauty is the prime motive of all his excellence,
> his aim and peaceful purpose ; whereby he himself
> becoming a creator hath often a thought to ask
> why Nature, being so inexhaustible in Beauty,
> should not be all-beauteous."

He, therefore, far more than the Wordsworthians, was an eclectic. But " This spiritual elation and response to Nature " will concern us here only in so far as it touches on such things as :

> " Earth's green robe which the sun fostereth for shelter and shower;
> The dance of young trees that in a wild birch-spinney
> toss to and fro the cluster of their flickering crests,
> as rye curtseying in array to the breeze of May ;
> The ancestral trunks that mightily in the forest choirs
> rear steadfast colonnade, or imperceptibly
> sway in tall pinewoods to their whispering spires ;
> The woodland's alternating hues, the vaporous bloom
> of the first blushings and tender flushings of spring ;
> The slumbrous foliage of high midsummer's wealth ;
> Rich autumn's golden quittance, to the bankruptcy
> of the black shapely skeletons standing in snow."

In *The Testament* he sees " Conscience as a natural flower-bud," and compares (in an extended passage) a plant and a child : " How differeth the new born child from plant or fledgling ? " While in his *Shorter Poems* he never tires of calling on plants and trees to help him express some mood, or just for their own sakes. Here is a sketch of the *North Wind in October* :

> " In the golden glade the chestnuts are fallen all ;
> From the sered boughs of the oak the acorns fall :
> The beech scatters her ruddy fire ;
> The lime hath stripped to the cold,
> And standeth naked above her yellow attire :
> The larch thinneth her spire
> To lay the ways of the wood with cloth of gold.
>
> " Out of the golden green and white
> Of the brake the fir-trees stand upright
> In the forest of flame, and wave aloft
> To the blue of heaven their bluegreen tuftings soft.

" But swiftly in shuddering gloom the splendours fail,
As the harrying North-wind beareth
A cloud of skirmishing hail
The grieved woodland to smite :
In a hurricane through the trees he teareth,
Raking the boughs and the leaves rending,
And whistleth to the descending
Blows of his icy flail.
Gold and snow he mixeth in spite,
And whirleth afar ; as away on his winnowing flight
He passeth and all again for a while is bright."

There are exquisite pieces like this Elegy (it is cruel to mutilate such perfectly finished lyrics) :

" The wood is bare : a river mist is steeping
The trees that winter's chill of life bereaves :
Only their stiffened boughs break silence, weeping
Over their fallen leaves ;

" That lie upon the dank earth brown and rotten,
Miry and matted in the soaking wet :
Forgotten with the spring that is forgotten
By them that can forget.

. . . . . .

" About her steps the trunks are bare, the branches
Drip heavy tears upon her downcast head ;
And bleed from unseen wounds that no sun stanches,
For the year's sun is dead.

" And dead leaves wrap the fruits that summer planted :
The birds that love the south have taken wing.
The wanderer, loitering o'er the scene enchanted,
Weeps, and despairs of spring."

Or that enchanting water-piece :

" There is a hill beside the silver Thames,
Shady with birch and beech and odorous pine :
And brilliant underfoot with thousand gems
Steeply the thickets to the floods decline.
Straight trees in every place
Their thick tops interlace
And pendant branches trail their foliage fine
Upon his watery face " ;

with the " drowning nenuphars " and a " gibbous moon " over " the blurring stream." And best possibly of all :—

" The hill pines were sighing,
O'ercast and chill was the day :
A mist in the valley lying
Blotted the pleasant May.

" But deep in the glen's bosom
Summer slept in the fire
Of the odorous gorse-blossom
And the hot scent of the brier.

" A ribald cuckoo clamoured,
And out of the copse the stroke
Of the iron axe that hammered
The iron heart of the oak.

" Anon a sound appalling,
As a hundred years of pride
Crashed, in the silence falling :
And the shadowy pine-trees sighed."

TERENCE HEYWOOD.

A QUIET MIND

DISTRACTION and unrest I will not share,
This boon from God, through Christ, is all my prayer—
A quiet mind, sin-washed from every care.

Just as the depths of ocean have a peace
All unaffected by the storm's release
Which suffers not the surface winds to cease,

So now my soul shall rest beneath the shade
Which God's almighty wings for me have made—
A Christ-possession time nor change can fade.

The hands of God support and hold my breath,
And known to Him is my appointed death ;
" My sheep shall have no fear," my Shepherd saith.

He rules the armies of the heavenly host,
And children of frail men in Him may boast
That for the trustful soul He cares the most.

And so to serve I have a quiet mind,
God's Word my light in this world's dark I find,
My joy to have a Saviour true and kind.

T. PITTAWAY.

THE ANCIENT CELTIC MUSE AND ITS EFFECTS UPON ENGLISH POETRY

THE conception held by Oswald Spengler of a psychic cultural unity through the contemplative creative power of individual thinkers which arises, ripens, decays and ultimately fades away, yet the influence of which exists for all time, appears to have been verified in Ireland's literary rebirth when expressions of exquisite passion were voiced once again by those poets who had derived their inspiration from some mysterious fountain in the super-normal race-consciousness, and that confirms the theory of their being a revelation of things hidden in things which are open to all. For the untrammelled Irish imagination of latterday poets such as Yeats and the late George W. Russell (Æ) have receded instinctively to where is glimmering through the mists of time the far remote mythology which to them is something superior to mere pleasantness or sensuous beauty, and is only comparable with the mythology of Ancient Greece.

Poetry thus displayed transcendentalism at large with a mythological background giving allegorical representations of what a dreaming world-soul had left pictured upon human imagination after the passing away of long-forgotten cultures, with a substratum of realities, for many traditional accounts are in the crucible of authentic history, and thus poetry and romance were born through a combination of symbolic thoughts wherein lay man's deepest dreams.

Symbols were originally made use of in ancient religions as visible objects having semblance to, and taken to represent hidden myths, or mysteries, which were revealed to the minds of observers by means of the imaginative faculty on account of their being associated with those emblems, and thus it was in accordance with lofty ideals that the early bards composed poetry befitting whatever occasion would arise.

Such objects were ever dear to the Irish imagination, and many poems and tales of past centuries have been translated and reshaped by the competent pens of poets

who succeeded in the difficult task of turning the Gaelic idiom into English phases of great beauty, such as is contained in *The Silver Branch*, an anthology of Irish poetry selected by Seán O'Fáoláin, and published by Jonathan Cape.

This is an important publication, and its importance has been recognized by critics in many of our leading periodicals, who are aware of the fact that poetry in Ancient Ireland had what was tantamount to an academic professionalism embracing a very remarkable culture.

Seán O'Fáoláin has carried out to an extent, and to a very creditable degree, what Dr. Douglas Hyde had hoped some researcher of the present day would endeavour to undertake, and that is to follow in the footsteps of those men who in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries gave an account of the more important works in the mass of sagas which has come down to us from pagan times, as well as the Gaelic literature from the days of St. Patrick and St. Columba to our own time ; but the present compiler, who is also the translator of a good many of the poems, has not given us a mere catalogue, but a very carefully chosen selection of scholarly translations into English from the original Gaelic, and these include the names of well-known Irish poets of the present day and of previous decades.

He has in his selection gone back to the very earliest times,—in fact to the years before history. There is a quotation on the title-page from *The Voyage of Bran*,[1] one of the oldest stories in the world, and Celtic no doubt in its origin, and it may have as well as other poetic tales originated in times long anterior to the Celtic invasions of Ireland. Emerson wrote " The Celts are the oldest blood in the world " and " are of an old family of whose beginning there is no memory." Their predecessors, the Aryans, who belonged to those pre-historic times, have long since vanished, leaving no written record, although some of the

[1] There is a poem in the collection entitled " Mananaan to Bran." Mananaan was the Neptune of the Celts, and the son of Lir (the sea). This is taken from the very old myth of Bran, the son of Febal, who sailed in his coracle to The Isles of the Happy. It was first written down, it is supposed, early in the eighth, probably the seventh century. The Isle of Man takes its name from Mananaan.

very earliest legends may possibly have had their source in that common heritage. It has been suggested that *Deirdre and the Sons of Visneach*, one of the best known of the ancient romances—a veritable goldmine for poets and dramatists—may have originated in that primeval fountain, as well as the exploits of Fionn and of his warriors, the Fianna, which belong to the Ossianic Cycle, and these are known by what has been termed Gaelic variants of tales once common to all Aryan races.

Matthew Arnold has further stated that the earliest Celts must have been poets on account of the names they had given to many of the rivers and mountains of Europe which imitate the pure voices of nature. W. B. Yeats maintained, in addition to other authorities, that the stories of Fionn and Ossian are of a date far away in the mists of time, probably long anterior to those of Cuchulain[1] and the Red Branch Knights, for the Ossianic Cycle belonged to an age of the gods, and the Heroic Cycle to that of kings who are almost historical.

Many of these tales and epics have been preserved in the ancient Irish manuscripts the bulk of which is truly enormous, two of the principal sources being the books of Leinster and Ballymote amidst a host of others, and these contain poetic pieces attributed to Oisin, the son of Finn (Fionn). Three of the poems in the present volume deal with this mythical period,—*Lament for Cael*, *Recollections of Oisin* and *Recollections of Caoilte*. The three have been translated by O'Fáoláin, and the subjects considering their great antiquity are most interesting. Cael O'Neamhain was a companion of the hero Fionn, and had married Crede, having won her affection by means of a love poem, *To fair Crede of the yellow hair*, but unfortunately he was drowned during a battle, and this is a portion of his wife's lament:

> "A woeful booming, and O, a woeful booming,
> the wave makes upon the northward beach:
> as for me—my span is declared,
> the passing of my beauty is known to all men."

Kuno Meyer wrote of this lament that it has been likened to a Highland coronach of later years.

[1] "Cuchulain has been called the Achilles of early Erin."—Aubrey de Vere.

In many of the old poems Christianity and paganism are brought together in a way that is nothing short of dramatic. Take, for example, Oisin, pronounced Ossian, who was the son of Fionn Mac Cumhaille, when he made his confession to St. Patrick, how he and his companions the Fianna hunted the deer, and of the great joy he had experienced in the chase, as well as the pleasure he had on the field of battle amidst " the clashing of shields and hewing of men's bones," and of his great joy when the enemy was defeated. But all had unfortunately happened three centuries previously when in the heyday of his youthful vigour—

> Fine was the beauty of the fair hair
> that all men saw on my head, then,
> but it has left me for good and all,
> and I am a sick-faced grey-pate.

During that long period he had been in the Land of the Ever-young with Niamb, and in his recollections of her said

> My quiet, fair-haired girl,
> it is a pity you did not
> wash my poor bald head for burial
> and lay me under the cold cairn.

Upon his return from the Land of Youth he accidentally set foot upon his native country,—where instead of his finding the Fianna was met by a procession of chaunting clerics,—and he suddenly changed to a decrepit old man.

In *The Recollections of Caoilte* the same idea is expressed, that personage was the old friend and comrade of Oisin—

> I, Caoilte, a brown Diarmuid,
> and keen, light Oscar
> would listen to the music of the pack
> in the waning end of the cold night.

Other tales contained in the section called The Heroic Tradition takes us further back to what is known as the old mythological cycle of tales, and one in particular, the *Tragedy of the Children of Lir*[1], deserves special attention if only on account of one of Moore's Irish melodies commencing with the line " Silent, O Moyle, be the roar of thy water."

[1] Lir was the Celtic sea-god, or the sea itself.

Some authorities hold an opinion that this tale is not so old as was generally believed, on account of its not having been represented in any of the ancient MSS., and the earliest is said to be in a Scottish collection written in the early seventeenth century which had some years previously been worked up by a monk; and yet upon the other hand there is reason for believing that this saga, or epic, on account of its undoubtable pagan origin, is in its later form a combination of very ancient myth with the Christian element, and had originated anterior to A.D. 1000, the myth with long oral tradition having existed for centuries before the Christian era. All the characters are supernatural, and the power of enchantment a common possession.

Thus, as so runs the tale, a wicked stepmother on account of being jealous of the favours bestowed by her husband upon his four children, transformed them by druidical enchantment into four beautiful swans, and thus they remained for nine centuries. One third of that long period they spent on the Western Sea, the Waters of Moyle. Previous to that epoch the Tuatha-de-Danaan and Milesian warriors would come and listen to their beautiful singing when floating upon the tranquil waters of a lake, as chariots stood by the shore, and warriors with their fair ladies were entranced both night and day, but alas! under that fatal spell they were doomed to take their flight to the sea of Moyle where they were obliged to endure piercing cold.

> Pitiful these crying swans to-night,
> caught by the ebb, or is it drought?
> Without water coldly flowing at their breasts,
> they, then, must die of thirst.

The Christian version of the tale has it that St. Columkille, who was celebrating Mass on Inis na Gluaire (Isle of Glory), restored them to their human forms, after they had flown over churches and heard chaunting of hymns, the same as in the tale of Oisin.

It has been said that the stories of the de Danaan belong to an age which represented the childhood of the human race, which tends to prove the immense antiquity of this tale.

I have already alluded to the probable antiquity of another tale which comes under the same heading, viz., *The Sorrows of Story-telling*, and belongs to the same group, and that is *Deirdre and the Sons of Uisneach.* This story is purely pagan and has no Christian bearing whatsoever, and may have sprung from some Indo-European romance.

Deirdre when an infant had her horoscope drawn by a druid, who being much troubled, declared that she would become a woman of such wondrous beauty that she would wed a king, but prove to be the cause of great misfortune. Conchobar, the king of Ulster, having lost his wife, decided upon having her reared up under the care of a nurse and in absolute seclusion, and marry her himself.

Through the nurse's instigation she met Naoisi, son of Usna (Uisneach), a champion of the Red Branch. She loved him and he carried her off to Alba by Loch Etive in Scotland. They were lured back to Erin, and Naoisi with his two brothers were treacherously slain. Deirdre, being forced into a marriage with King Conchobar and on account of the loss of her lover, leaped from a swiftly-moving chariot and was killed.

There are other poems in the collection dealing with this legend, and the following verses are from *Deirdre looks back at Scotland*, translated by the compiler :

> Beloved to me is the land to the East,
> Alba with its marvels,
> I would not have come hither from it
> if I were not come with Naoisi.
>
> Glen Laid !
> I used to sleep there under the white rocks
> fish and flesh and rich badger,
> was my share in Glen Laid.
>
> Beloved is Draigen and its firm strand,
> beloved its water in pure sand :
> I would not have come from the East
> if I were not to come with my lover.

There are other poems based upon stories of equal interest such as *The Tryst with Death*, *Liadain and Cuirithir*, *The*

Sleep-song of Diarmuid, etc., belonging to The Heroic Tradition.

One of those tales reads like a story from the *Decameron*, but without its rich licentiousness. It concerns Liadain, a poetess who had taken the veil after having met Cuirithir, a young poet, but she quitted the convent and went to the county of Connaught in order to seek for him. He had meanwhile become a pilgrim and went on the sea to strange lands, so they never met again. According to tradition she died upon the flagstone where her lover used to pray :

I am she,
Liadain that loved Cuirithir,
as you murmur watching me.

It was I
that in company with him
saw so good a time go by.

Woods woke
to music when he walked with me,
and for me the blue sea spoke.

In the first division, "The Church," one of the poems, is called *The Heavenly Banquet*, which some mediæval poet has ascribed to Saint Bridget. I doubt if one can take that poet seriously, whoever he may have been, for we can rest assured that the saintly Bridget never expressed herself in the following manner :—

I would like to have the men of Heaven
in my own house ;
with vats of good cheer
laid out for them.

I would like a great lake of beer
for the King of Kings.
I would like to be watching Heaven's family
drinking it through all eternity.

At St. Patrick's Purgatory is interesting for the fact alone that the verses are attributed to Mor O'Dala, thirteenth century, " the greatest religious poet that Ireland has produced," according to Eleanor Hull.

The cavern on an island in Lough Derg was a place of pilgrimage during the Middle Ages, and Froissart relates a conversation he had with a certain knight who with others passed the night in the Purgatory. They all slept soundly and had wonderful dreams which, when morning came, were clean forgotten. Very different was the experience of a penitent :

> In a narrow, hard, stone-wall cell
> I lie after all my sinful pride—
> O woe, why cannot I weep a tear !—
> and I buried alive in the grave.

This would also apply to a hermit's cell upon the rocky coast of the West of Ireland, or out in the Atlantic itself, for many of those cells can still be seen on a small island ten miles from land, where anchorites in this second Thebaid spent their winters in cold and darkness 600 feet above the waves, and they must have crawled to their chapels on account of the fearful gusts of wind.

The best off, I consider, was St. Brenden, although he quitted his native land, forsaking friends and kindred in order to find the Terrestrial Paradise, which lay upon the edge of the world, far away upon the wide ocean. We are told that he arrived there after many adventures, which remind one of those that happened to Sinbad the Sailor, and the six months he spent upon a glorious island slipped by in a few seconds. When he returned to his abbey his very garments were still fragrant with the odours of Paradise. This verse records one of his adventures :

> The most strenuous form of consecration
> was chosen by Brendan, and by him alone ;
> according to synod and congregation,
> he sat seven years on a whale's backbone.

In the section entitled " The Woods," " The Mountains," " The Sea," many of the poems which are the most pleasing are thoroughly imbued with the spirit of Gaelicalism, which has become a source of inspiration for many modern Irish poets, although the beauty of the original bardic poetry must be lost in translation. Nevertheless, there still remains the strong romantic element combined with the

Celtic love of colour and beauty which the translators have endeavoured to display in a totally different language, and at the same time many of the characters belonging to the ancient world have doubtless been preserved, as well as the internal assonance, a feature in Gaelic poetry. The following verses from *May-day*, translated by T. W. Rolleston, are good examples.

Now comes the bird of dusty hue,
The loud cuckoo, like summer lover;
Branchy trees are thick with leaves;
The bitter evil time is over.

Corncrake sings from eve to morn,
Deep in corn a strenuous bard!
Sings the virgin waterfall, white and tall
Her one sweet word.

or this lyric translated by Seán O'Fáoláin

Summer is gone.
I have but one story—
the stags are moaning,
the sky is snowing,
Summer is gone. . . .

The wild geese cry
down the storm;
the ferns have fallen,
russet and torn.

The wings of the birds
are clotted with ice.
I have but one story—
Summer is gone.

There are many more exquisite nature poems, and are from very ancient sources in addition to those of the mythological and heroic cycles of tales having had a long lineage through remote periods down to those Gaelic poets who during successive epochs gave expression in poetry to their glowing thoughts, and awakened sleeping images of past splendours in festive halls, where their predecessors for many years after the coming of the Normans had been engaged as household minstrels by members of the great nobility.

It will never be known what poets had penned many of those inspired lays filled with chivalry of soul in their cries of revolt against existing laws, and at the same time were replete with religious ecstasy, and many of their wandering utterances depended upon, or were more or less inspired by the sweet minor strains of national music. I give the following lyric as an example translated by Dr. Robin Flower:

Over my head the forest wall
Rises; the ousel sings to me;
Above my booklet lined for words
The woodland birds shake out their glee.

There's the blithe cuckoo chanting clear
In mantle grey from bough to bough;
God keep me still! For here I write
His gospel bright in great woods now.

Stephen Gwynn has thus written, "in the eighteenth century nobody using English sought to explore Ireland's intellectual inheritance." Even Swift, who, despite his English parentage, had taken up the cause of people around him, was not interested to any extent in Irish history or literature, and looked upon the old legends as foolish and nonsensical, although he was not adverse from taking the story of the visit of the pigmys to the Court of the King of Ulster as a foundation for his episode of Gulliver's travels to Lilliput in his immortal book.

Gaelic poetry in Ireland has been handed down from a learned community known as the Filidh, who were the poets, and, in the courts of kings they had addressed all ranks; they recited or chaunted to music of the harp, events that even in those remote times were ancient, of kings and chieftains who had fought at the head of their armies, leading them in the strife, telling of heroic actions and wild events, hairbreadth escapes and wonderful adventures that befell the heroes, in which wonder and romance predominated. These bards are said to have been the priests of the national imagination.

Poems continued to be composed later by wandering harpers, singing as did Moore of "the pride of former days" down to the reign of King James I of England, when

Gaelic culture had entirely passed away, although many still continued to write new forms of verse with many changes, but still adhering to the old traditions, such as the old metrical tales of kings, queens and heroes, as well as those daughters of poets' dreaming imagination who shone amidst the twilight of the mythical borderland of history.

Many of those old poetic stories have been hauled down from mediæval times, having been altered and condensed into brief poetical versions, and these still remain in the memories of the country-folk, particularly those of an older generation on account of their being known to them traditionally from the days of those wandering poets and seanachies, many of whom were of peasant birth and had become hedge schoolmasters, and more were genuine scholars and men of genius who were well acquainted with classical lore, as well as both readers and speakers of Gaelic, and had studied the ancient manuscripts wherever available.

Many poets of the Gael were a ranting, roving crew, all true Bohemians of the countryside, often indulging in drunken bouts, and yet those vagabond poets kept the memory of Ancient Ireland green both in history and legend in the minds of the people :

> Long seemed to me until dispersal of the school
> that I saw by Ferghal's side
> longer than the dispersal of the school
> is it to have lost my teacher's kindness.
>
> My prowness in his banquetting hall
> has been punished by draughts of sorrow :
> if I have lived riotously O God,
> the punishment is sour.

Thus many wayside flowers of the imagination shed their sweetness amidst the purple dusk through long years of travail, and behind that premature culture lay a literature of the utmost value which enables the present-day scholar to seek for and discover knowledge within a dim horizon which extended beyond the days of Herodotus ; that legendary background which was in the national Celtic consciousness. As George Birmingham wrote, " very ancient legends of saints and pagan heroes have survived

and are told generation after generation," and this is verified over and over again; peasants in Donegal have the old songs about Oisin and the Fianna, and stories concerning Cuchulain. In the Arran Islands they tell folk-tales of the same ancient heroes. Dr. Douglas Hyde states that he had collected thirty stories from the peasantry, and W. B. Yeats in his young days heard many of the old heroic stories from the peasants. I remember reading of a North of Ireland gentleman who, in his day, employed a professional story-teller to put him to sleep by reciting one of the tales of Fionn and his Fianna.

Spenser recognized the value of Ireland's literature as it existed in his day, yet at the same time he was prejudiced by political feelings as well as racial antagonisms. Goldsmith, whose poetry appealed to Anglo-Irish and English readers, did not concern himself in the least with those very early literatures as barbaric dissonances sounded strange to his ears.

Out of the vast number of sagas and romances many were changed and modernized by learned groups, and certainly Irish poetry declined, although at the same time the poets who were both historians and scholars endeavoured to sustain a high level of literary style, but their poems lacked that spontaneity so natural to the native genius, and I imagine beauty of form and structure, consequently they were not poetry in the true sense. It was those minor poets who had wandered throughout the countryside, going from village to village, had revived in the minds of the people the thoughts of other days. As an old writer put it, "they had warlike songs for the men, love-ditties for the women, and marvellous tales for the children," and their stories have been compared with *The Arabian Nights*, or *Don Quixote*, on account of their having displayed the most extraordinary feats of extravagant fancy when dealing with the deeds of the Celtic demigods and heroes, which were once the outcome of Pagan imagination.

Native minstrels, it is said, had existed in Ireland from the time of the early invasions, before the days of authentic history, and their influence can be traced "in one unbroken wreath of song."

According to Matthew Arnold and others, rhyme was first introduced into English poetry after the Anglo-Saxon literatures came into contact with the Celtic. It was a distinguishing feature from what we know as classical poetry of the ancient world, also the alliterative verse that was a characteristic structure of old English and Teutonic versification, as it not only introduces magic and charm, but actual melody. This reminds one of how the Italian Petrarch tuned the melody of his verses to the sweet tones of the lute.[1]

The Celts, owing to their love of colour, brought into their poetry a reflection, as it were, of natural objects, which in the full glow of their beauty became visionary perspectives to the poetic mind, and these were not mere flights of fancy or imagination, but that magical charm known as the element of romance.

The pre-Christian poets never changed that impelling force, even after conversion to the new theological teaching, and still the effects upon the imagination and art of Western Europe remained, and many features in the Arthurian romance display strong traces of having found their origin in Irish as well as Welsh and Briton sources.

Many English poets have exhibited that sense of Celtic vision. Shakespeare has been accredited with having on several occasions struck that Celtic chord which vibrates through some of the most exquisite passages throughout his works. Other poets have had similar inspiration, coming down to Tennyson, who not only studied deeply the *Morte d'Arthur*, but displayed in his poems what a writer has pointed out as the pursuit of the unknown and the mysterious, also that delicacy of passion which pervades the *Idyls of the King*, and it influenced Matthew Arnold, who wrote of *Tristram and Iseult* and also the glories vibrating through the poems of William Morris on similar themes, as well as Swinburne's *Tristram of Lyonnesse*, one of the most beautiful poems in the English language.

H. T. HUNT GRUBB.

[1] Henry Van Dyke states that the Psalms were written, in the original Hebrew according to a system of versification, and perhaps to some extent with forms of rhyme.

"WHILE OF UNSOUND MIND"

THEY have taken you from me.
I lie alone in the darkness,
Racked with the little, sharp, persistent crucifying of the flesh,
Sick with the nagging of the flesh, that is nothing,
And less than nothing.

They came to you in my garden, and I afar;
You! my flame and my dream, my altar and my longing.
My lily they tore, and crushed it;
They brake it, and trampled it in the earth,
In the green earth, that was kind until they came.

"Illicit love," they murmured; and wept.
Crocodile tears. Their eyes glistened.
They, who never knew love.
They, who shall never know that love is beyond law—lawless!
Afar and above the mountains of the moon,
Striding beyond the sun and the stars and the crazy dark patterns of the sky,
Burning in immensity; cradled in the littleness of a dream.
"Illicit love!" And laughed. And took you away.

They did not know that love was alive.
They did not know that love was a thing born,
A creature alive with a thousand million nerves
That beat and burn and scream in the darkness.
With sharp nails they tore; plucked at it; prodded.
Delicately they drew their fingers across it,
Back and back,
To and fro, like a shuttle;
Sharpened and ragged:
And the sound it made, like jagged nails on satin.

It is plucking now . . .

The water is smooth and clean, wan and clear in the grey morning,
Crystal-clear and pure like something I knew, once . . . long ago.
Under it the green weeds are waving,
Twining vain fingers about the water
That glides past; slips past.
It is like something I knew, once . . . something . . .
Long ago, in a dream . . . I cannot remember.

Underneath, there is peace, I know.
I know! because hell is over, and heaven a dream.
There is only peace now, and the clear, smooth flowing of the uncaring water.

DOROTHY MARGARET PAULIN.

DYNAMICS OF AMERICAN POETRY: LXXII

CONRAD AIKEN, born in Savannah, Georgia, in 1889, graduate of Harvard (1911), winner of the Pulitzer Prize (1929), introduces his sixth book of poems, *Time in the Rock* (Charles Scribner Sons). Here is a veritable flood of thought and experience and beauty of line. These poems are without titles—the first line designating. In these swinging lines, Mr. Aiken gives us graphic pictures. Quoting from mid-way in the book:

> O angel, guide us still, lend us brave wings
> that we may mount wide circles through confusion:
> seeing, in to-day's action, to-morrow's word;
> knowing, in to-morrow's word, the seed of death.

The following is characteristic of the charm and music to be found in this distinguished volume:

> Destiny comes in as softly as a sunbeam
> greets you with the subtlety of thistledown
> smiles with all light and as nimbly as light
> is here and there and nowhere all at once:
> the air that enfolds you when you open the window
> the speck of dust that drops from your sleeve
> the sound of a dove on the roof.
>
> . . . . .
>
> Make it, mortal,
> as you would have it—lift your hands and take
> the sunbeam into your palm, imagine
> the white light which is yours.

Associate Professor of English at Columbia University, Literary Editor of *The Nation*, Mr. Mark Van Doren is the author of many distinguished critical studies of both American and British literature; and a number of volumes of poetry, his latest being *The Last Look And Other Poems* (Henry Holt and Co., New York). Mr. Van Doren's poetry conforms to no school or cult and is expressive of a critic's fastidious appreciation in choice of word and subject. Through an obscurity in many of his lines, there pervades continually a suggestion of mystery and, at times, in such a line as: "The horses fed like angels," we are reminded of Gertrude Stein.

We quote the first and third stanzas of a very characteristic poem, "Private Worship":

> She lay there in the stone folds of his life
> Like a blue flower in granite. This he knew;
> And knew how now inextricably the petals
> Clung to the rock; recessed beyond his hand-thrust;
> More deeply in, past more forgotten windings
> Than his rude tongue could utter, praising her. . . .

She was not his to keep—except the brightness,
Flowing from her, that lived in him like dew;
And the kind flesh he could remember touching,
And the unconscious lips, and both her eyes:
These lay in him like leaves, beyond the last turn
Breathing the rocky darkness till it bloomed.

This quality of highly charged emotion we find also in "The Letter," a poem of eight stanzas, of which we give the first, fourth, and fifth:

You will not doubt I loved her,
You are too wise, and know
Too well that love is little,
Too well that love is low. . . .

I mean there was a tired way
Her ankles crossed the floor.
And there were sleep and sweetness
In the slant cape she wore.

I mean that I remember,
Now she is gone awhile,
Nothing about her forehead
Save that the hair could smile.

The unique use of words characteristic of this poet is marked in the following from "Inarticulate":

The morning flashed like mica,
And the tendrils stretched
Like dawnrays—every leaf a little sun.
A wind flowered out of nowhere,
And the birds inwove
Bright walls of air with streaks of curving song.

The horses fed like angels,
And the pasture spread
Like tidegrass—greenness foaming over all.
The fencewire dripped with dewdrops,
And the rabbits sat
High-eared across the never parching ground.

The Flight of the Rokh, by Mary Owen Lewis (David McKay Co., Philadelphia), a fourth volume of poems by the author of *The Phantom Bow*, *Tower Window*, and *Peddler's Pack*, brings to the reader a number of well-done sonnets and sensitive lyrics. Miss Lewis is impressed with an emotional and spiritual thinness of American life and believes we need to lay aside all purely personal poems, to publish those that may give our feeble searching roots of human brothers nourishment.

Illustrating this persuasion, this poet expresses her interest in humankind in the following sonnet, " My Own People " :

I cannot talk with anyone deprived
By poverty of full and splendid life
Without a catch of tenderness. I hived
With such in early youth. The animal strife
Attendant on mere living was so fierce
That I can never forget. And never feel
Other than kin to those whom sufferings pierce
Through shame or want or ignorance. To steal
Such beauty as one may from one's own past
To give to them or to awake their force
To oppose their arrogant drivers ; to hold fast
Their shaky courage, pointing out the course
That they must take, unarmed except with will
This task is worth one's utmost to fulfil.

The haunting and illusive spirit of song is described feelingly in " Song I Shall Never Sing " :

Somewhere over the mountains a goatherd is playing
The song that I would be rendering word by word.
Somewhere along the valleys the wind is swaying
The tops of the trees to a melody all but heard.

And the mountain waters are softly and swiftly flowing
To bring me the measures I need. But my lifted ear
Is blurred with the myriad tones and there's no knowing
How to set down the marvellous things I hear.

The delicate song, the final song I am seeking
Always eludes me, drawing me piper-wise
To the dangerous world where magical sounds are speaking
In a language deaf to the ear and blind to the eyes.

Fear is the Thorn, by Rachel Field (Macmillan), brings us excellent sonnets and well-turned lyrics. The title poem follows :

Fear is the scorn that guards the rose,
  By unscarred hands ignored,
The ancient antidote for bliss,
  The guest at bed and board.
Fear is the penalty of love,
  The heart's most secret leaven,
A subtle east wind sent to dim
  The too bright shores of heaven.

Miss Field was the winner of the John Newberry medal for the most distinguished contribution to literature for children in 1929.

" No Cloudy Coach " gives us Miss Field's notable gift for sonnet writing :

The season has not failed me, once again
This miracle of life in frailest bloom
Has been vouchsafed,—here where the old trees loom
Trunk upon rough brown trunk in northern Maine.
No cloudy coach ; no rainbow at the brink
Of space ; no manna in the wilderness ;
No burning bush more sure a sign than this
Renewal of the twin-flower's punctual pink.
So, though the reason falter, though the brain,
Badgered by doubt, assailed by bitterness,
Reject the symbol, still the heart must guess
What never tongue may speak, or thought explain,—
Taking assurance from the quickened root,
From each star-prick of petal underfoot.

Silas Perkins, son of a Kennebunkport, Maine, sea captain, writes of Maine people and of the sea in *On Shore Ballads* (Falmouth Book House, Maine). His poetry is compared with that of James Whitcomb Riley, the much loved household poet. In these poems, besides finding the interesting down-East characters, we have the high winds of that rocky coast and the fascination of the ocean.

The first poem in this volume gives a faithful and stirring picture of Maine : " The quiet of a village street, where the green of the elm trees arch and meet, and drip cool shadows across the walks, where neighbor meets neighbor and stands and talks."

Perkins writes us a paragraph on poetry, as follows :

> " I cannot help thinking if there was a more universal love of poetry there would be a better understanding of human nature, and therefore a panacea for some of this world's ills. I may be wrong in this, but certainly the writer of poetry has his thoughts lifted to a higher plane, as he cannot help but feel what he writes, and naturally, he writes mainly of beautiful things. Sordid and low things are seldom written, and if they are written, are mainly to point a moral. The love of poetry never harmed a man, and has benefited many."

All lovers of the sea will respond to Perkins' appreciation in his poem called " Call Of The Open Sea," a lively and spirited sea-song :

O buried deep in the heart of man
Lives the call of the open sea ;
And the lure of the land cannot still this song
Wherever he chance to be.
For years untold and a thousand more
The salt spray bit man's face,
And his roving eye sought horizons far
Where the combing billows race,

And it will not be that a roll-top desk
And the drone of a scratching pen,
Can still the urge for the boundless sea
That lives in the hearts of men.

And again, in "The Country Road," Mr. Perkins draws a telling picture:

I like a road which seems to say,
"Come with me; let us wander away
Over the hills all up and down,
Past green meadows, by yonder town,
Skirt the stream where waters leap,
By sunlit field, a-down the steep,
Up to the hilltop, past the ledge,
By cottage quaint and green-clad hedge."

Many of these poems are in a quaint dialect of Maine characters.

Carl Holliday, author of *The Dawn of Literature*, *The Cavalier Poets*, *Peeps*, *Through Colonial Windows*, etc., presents in *Abraham Lincoln in Heaven* a long poem, original in its conception. Lincoln has ever drawn the poets to write of him because of the idealism which was a fundamental characteristic of the beloved Lincoln. Here we have Lincoln set forth as witnessing from his abode in the—

"Celestial realm where every spirit finds
Within itself its Heaven or Hell"

the events of our world.

A fine piece of writing is the following description of this great soul and patriot:

"The silence of the forest filled the man,
The silence of the brooks that creep through ferns
And under mossy stones. His was the calm
And brooding silence of the oak and beech
That nod majestic, lofty heads when breaths
Of summer air sigh soft. The silence of
The creatures scurrying unseen through grass,
And his the silence of the snow that drifts
In weird and ghostly forms through sleeping woods.
No man yet lived whose boyhood roamed so much
Amidst the silences of wilderness.
No man could enter more into the realm
Of silent meditation or commune
With self so long. The silence of his soul
Seemed listening to some far voice unheard
By little men, all busy with their schemes
Of little things, and from him ever flowed
The power of forest stillness, deep and calm
And all-pervading."

Lincoln meets with the millions of soldiers killed in the war, described in the quotation following:

" Lincoln, lover of mankind,
Turns searching eyes upon his stricken world,
And lo! all Europe legend died. And woe
Unutterable was on the land. And still
The armies clashed, and sent their dismal hosts
Of souls bewildered up to spirit land,
And Jesus left the light of God's ôwn throne
And walked among the milling dead and wept."

This impressive celebration of the great Lincoln ends :

" Not since the man of Galilee did walk
And talk with men has any spirit held
Such sway o'er human destiny or gained
Such love and adoration of our groping race! "

Poet and critic for the *Boston Evening Transcript*, and Professor in the English Department of Tufts, where John Holmes teaches modern poetry and versification, he gives us his first collection of poems, *Address to the Living* (Henry Holt and Co.).

The volume opens with the statement on poetry, of which we give the concluding lines :

> " Poetry is the tree of life packed in a seed and planted in heart and mind, where it takes root, and grows green, and flowers, and is the tree again. * * * Poetry is what sight would be to the blind, speech to the dumb, walking to the crippled, and life to the condemned; but you and I see, speak, walk, live and we have poetry."

John Holmes' poetry has been likened, in its vigorous optimism and joy of living, to Rupert Brooke's. The poem which gives the title to this volume opens as follows :

Young men and men with eyes alive and quick,
With health and passion in the way you walk :
Women with hands delighting now in furs
To touch, now polished wood : women who talk
Aware of webs that whirl from mind to mind :
Women and men for whom the air is clear,
And time a wave at crest : women and men
Whose honor is the blood : I greet you here.

This lengthy dedication ends with :

Then break the silence with a voice of praise;
Open the door that opens towards the sky;
Press mind and body hard against this world,
Before we fall asleep, before we die.

We give " Panther In The Mind," a stirring and graphic statement :

The panther in my mind asleep
Has lain a long time quiet there.
He breathes the dark and flowing air,
An easy prisoner to keep.
I can remember when his tread
Wore out a track across the cage
From side to side, uncomforted
In grief and love and groping rage.
So mute and bitter his despair,
His teeth were at my heart like fire,
Until the valiance in my flesh
Was burned away and turned to ash.
But when at last I level pride,
A wasted wall, a useless thing,
And bend the bars of reason wide,
The best will spring.

John Holmes' " The Green Door " is a new and original expression about Death, which begins with :

When I have come upon the green door, death,
The only opening in a sudden wall,
And pushed it wide, and shut it at my back,
I shall not care what lies before at all.

The poet's happiness and gratitude for the experience of living is here, and his unwillingness to close the chapter of life we find fervently said in the last two lines :

Only to cry with mind and heart and tongue
That death at any age is dying young.

Sister Madeleva, the distinguished lyrist, follows the Catholic poetic tradition in *A Question of Lovers And Other Poems*, and *The Happy Christmas Wind And Other Poems* (St. Anthony Guild Press, New Jersey), which are spiritual, colourful and persuasive. *A Question of Lovers* has passed into its second printing. Charming we find, " I Enter Oxford " :

It was a bird first spoke to me at Oxford
Through the white fog a single, tentative word.
There were, that daybreak, in my new world only
I and a bird.

I had no grateful syllable to answer,
No littlest sign to say I understood
That lyric word to me, more brave than sunlight,
More kind than food.

Oh ! there are bells and there are spires at Oxford,
Ancient, heartbreaking, wordless, splendorous things ;
Only to me belongs this simple, silver
Welcome on wings.

Beautiful is " Communion " :

Having held you
I have held whiteness intense and austere as the snows that rest
On that far, lone mountain, against my breast.
I have held whiteness more shining and splendid than clouds that start
In still skies of summer, upon my heart.
I have held whiteness more wistful and dear than a child's alarms,
Than a flower upfolded, within my arms.
I have held whiteness that burns like a flame, that broods like a dove
In my soul forever,—I have held love.

This collection closes with a number of sonnets. We choose from among them " Christmas In Provence—Midnight Mass " :

To-night this city seated on a hill
Wears its mediæval fortress like a crown
Above a brow too peace-possessed to frown.
Its ancient church watches the darkness fill
With quiet aureoles of light that spill
Through little streets that clamber up the town.
Here ancient, royal kings have laid them down,
And here, this night, a King will rest Him still.

I had not known that night could be so holy ;
I had not thought that peace could be so deep.
O passion of night and peace, possess me solely !
O passion of love, be mine this night to keep !
O little climbing streets, lead me up slowly
To where the King I wait for lies asleep !

The Happy Christmas Wind And Other Poems is a slim, attractive volume, exquisitely presented in a starry cover of silver and white, a lovely Christmas gift. We quote from the last poem, giving the first four stanzas and the last :

I watch the shadow folk creep down,
The white-faced stars climb up the sky ;
I hear the little winds go by ;
I see the far lights of the town.

I feel that peace is over them
And out of it this word I hear,
" The blessed time is very near,
The holy night at Bethlehem."

Over and over I repeat,
" O Bethlehem, O holy night,
O angel host, O starry light
Above a Baby small and sweet."

Then how I wish that I had been
A holy king, a shepherd dumb ;
With what glad haste I would have come
To see the things that they have seen !
. . . . .
I watch the shadows fall and hear
The little winds ; I take your hand
In mine and we both understand
That Bethlehem is very near.

Sister Madaleva, in answer to a query of mine, tells in the following paragraph why she writes poetry :

" Truthfully I write verses because I need to and because I love to. In my sophomore year in college I discovered quite inadvertently that I could express myself accurately and intensely this way. I have almost needed to write verse at times since then. Thought, experience, reaction accumulate to a point where they demand expression and then I write. The exercise is both discipline and outlet. To me it is the most satisfying of ascetic and æsthetic experience that I personally can achieve. * * * Poetry is born of labour and suffering. It is conceived of vision surely but developed through restraint and discipline. Impatience with or unwillingness to incur such ascetic experience, I believe, keeps many potential poets from becoming articulate.

" I might urge the writing of poetry as an experience in the joy and beauty of life and as a contribution to that joy and beauty. Our world needs both. It needs the faith and the hope and the love by which a poet lives. These are simple things and I offer them simply to you."

John Williams Andrews tells us in his Foreword to *Prelude to Icaros* (Farrar and Rinehart) that this volume was made up of selections from the prelude to a much longer narrative poem, dealing with the Lindbergh New York to Paris flight of 1927. The narrative itself is now entitled " Lindbergh Legend : A Poem of the Trans-Atlantic Flight of 1927."

Prelude to Icaros is written with much enthusiasm for the subject and an originality of treatment that gives the reader a very realistic impression of the excitement—nay, more the ecstasy of flying. To give an idea of this poet's effective and breezy treatment, we quote the opening of the poem—Part I—which covers some eight pages :

Wings!
Wings heavy over the mountains!
Wings heavy over the coastal and interior plains!
Wings heavier still over the oceans and the tributaries of the oceans!
Wings in the darker blue, where the hills are not,
where the round white clouds
and the cloud-floors
pass and repass
on their long wanderings,
where storms pile
cloud-mountain on cloud-mountain,
where thunders are,
and the snake-tongues of lightning,
and the hail's hatcheries!

In this narrative we meet Daedalus and Icaros, Pilatre de Rozier and at last Wilbur and Orville Wright.

Mr. Andrews learned to fly to make sure of the correctness and grasp of his subject. This poet was a contemporary of MacLeish and Stephen Vincent Benet, Thornton Wilder, and Philip Barry at Yale.

Thrilling is the account of the Wright's first successful flight, which we give:

There was wind, there were clouds; but they set out the wooden track
On the level in front of the camp; and the weights, and the pulleys.
Then the *Flyer* was brought from its shed and shook in the gusts;
It leaped like a living thing as they took it down-wind,
And set it firm on the rail and started the motor;
Long warming, this time: dull roar and the streamers of smoke;
The exhaust-pipes barking; the shakes of the separate parts—
Cams, pistons and gears; the flanges of cylinder-shells;
The crankshaft set on its bearings; the chains and the oil—
All growing mellow with heat, uniting and blending;
Adjustments of differing metals—harmonious whole.
Then Orville squeezed through the wires and stretched out on the wing;
He tested the cradle-controls and tripped the release.
Slowly the kite moved off in the grip of the wind.
It crept like a snail; it lurched like a clumsy duck;
It was drunk on the wind—and Wilbur could easily walk there
And steady the wing with his hand; but soon he was running—
His legs were soon pumping like pistons, his coat-tails flying.
Then the *Flyer* pulled out of his hand. The mouths of the watchers
Were dry with excitement and wind. The *Flyer* teetered;
It bumped on the wooden rail; it slewed and came straight.
Then it rose from the rail. None spoke at all as it lifted.
They stood there, glued to the sand, their hearts in their eyes.
It lifted. The skids were clear. It was clear of the sand.

Mr. Andrews sends us an interesting account of himself and his poetry:

"I can only say that this poem in particular, and the writing of poetry in general, have been things which I could not escape. I really did my best: newspaper work (in China for two years), law school the practice of law; but all the time the necessity to write was gnawing somewhere under the surface, until, when circumstances combined to make it possible, I gave up and went to it. I suppose that one individual's interpretation of the things he sees, has its value somewhere in the scheme of things. I have an unfortunate necessity to see things 'in the round'; and having once caught a glimpse of something that seems to me to be inescapably true, to communicate, at least to a piece of paper, what I have seen. I have been writing since I was fourteen; through school and college and the very active years since; but gradually I learned that, for me at least, I could not combine activity and writing. They are antagonistic, both from the point of view of seeing things from a sufficient distance to make them clear, and from the point of view of the energy necessary to state them truthfully. So my wife and I have set up housekeeping in a beautiful, remote valley, where we summer and winter, and where life is based on a fine companionship, on books and country, on the intensely valuable and well-winnowed view of the world—music and affairs and such—that comes in quietly over the radio; with friends who visit us and also contact with our country neighbors and our own visits out to see people and gather material. In this way, we think, a balanced view of life is obtainable; and after that it is just a question of setting down what has been seen. But seeing clearly, in general and in regard to detail is most difficult to do. In connection with *Prelude to Icaros* I have a lot of cardboard boxes that contain the various drafts and re-drafts, copyings and re-copyings that finally made up the two hundred manuscript pages of Icaros. For a final result I find that I covered close to *ten thousand* pages, single spaced and no two exactly alike, simply because not until the end and the last change, was the last detail seen clearly enough, although from the beginning the general idea and general plan were plain. It was a problem of how to change the ideas into visual images—once those images were clear there was no trouble at all about words. They came in in a sort of left-handed way—over the shoulder, as it were. What part the final product plays 'in the modern life of to-day' I haven't the faintest idea. I know that my personal necessity is to synthesize modern life—not the middle ages or revolutionary times or anything antique; and the future, in the sense of imagining what the world will become, does not seem so important, since I shall not

be around to see it. And, of course, modern life is made up of some very definite elements, with a flavour and colour of their own, that are neither right-wing nor left-wing nor science nor religion nor politics nor personalities; but a synthesis of all of them. This, in a very general way, is what I seem to be looking at as I go along from day to day, and so is what I am trying to put down on paper."

ALICE HUNT BARTLETT.

London Streets Named After Poets

(*To the Editor of* The Poetry Review.)

Sir,—Apropos the statement of a correspondent on page 90 of the current volume of the P.R., that London's streets and public places have nothing to remind us of our greatest London poets, reference to the Post Office's sixpenny pamphlet, Names of Streets and Places in the London Postal Area, gives this result for the names mentioned in your note:

Chaucer (number of streets, roads, etc., so named, omitting possessive cases) 5, Spenser 3, Milton 26, Herrick 2, Gray 4, Pope 0, Keats 1, Hood 1, Blake 4, Browning 3, Swinburne 2, Byron 8, Ruskin 7, Lamb 6.

Probably street names are not what your correspondent had in mind, but they do at least serve as reminders.

Yours faithfully,

United University Club, S.W.1. Denis Turner.

Distorted Browning

(*To the Editor of* The Poetry Review.)

Sir,—An "Uncritical Cinema" correspondent of *The Times* is the latest to repeat the old offence of referring to Browning as an "undiscriminating optimist." The great humanist poet did not say *in propria persona* "All's right with the world"; it was the verdict of the irresponsible, temporarily carefree Pippa. Apropos, my opinion of modern criticism in general and of a Georgian poet of some reputation in particular, remains prejudiced by the latter declaring that the first two lines of *Rabbi ben Ezra* were foolish and incorrect, because Browning there says, "Grow old along with me, the best is yet to be." No one wishes to grow old with a tedious old man and the best is never with old age but remains behind us. It should be so obvious that whether these lines are acceptable or not, they are true in relation to the subject of the poem—Browning was not necessarily speaking for himself. He is too often distorted in this way.

London, S.W.1. Yours etc.,
April 6th, 1938. "De Gustibus."

A Chipping Sodbury contributor asks: "Allow me also to express my warm appreciation of The Poetry Review—it is excellent."

POETRY REVIEWERS AMONG THE NEW BOOKS

What at first sight is most striking about Mr. Edward James's *The Bones of my Hand* (O.U.P., 10s. 6d.) is the extreme sumptuousness of the volume, with its frontispiece by M. Paul Tchelitcheff (two beautifully drawn hands and an X-ray photograph of the bones of a hand); its title-page in two colours, and its score of the music to which M. Henri Sauguet has set one of Mr. James's songs. The lavishness of the book as a piece of the bookmaker's art is in keeping with the dedication, which is to "Morpheus, Icelos called Phobetor and to Phantasos."

The first poem, which bears no title, tells of the flight of Io, daughter of the river Inachus, after her lover, Jove, has changed her into a white heifer, to conceal the liason from the prying Juno, "sister and wife." There is a fine line in this poem:

> The Greek eyes of the oxen in the plain
> full of black almond wonder and despair. . .

Unfortunately, that good line is followed almost immediately by the line

> Daisies those Pleiads of the lawny earth,

a line too closely resembling Shelley's

> Daisies, those pearl'd Arcturi of the earth,

not to have been written in emulation. (Another line written by Mr. James in emulation, this time of Marvell's

> To a green thought in a green shade,

is

> pain of green thoughts in the green shade).

A long, felicitous poem is *La Belle Au Bois Dormant*, full of lepidopterous lore (in the briar-surrounded sleepy garden butterflies and moths naturally abound), and having woven into it a charming dream of La Belle's whilst asleep.

It is a pity that *Astronomical Dust* should not be more intelligible as a whole, seeing that it can number as one of its a single stanza as good as:

> On that curved plane of heaven's veldt
> starvepanged Orion pulls his belt
> tighter, to keep the Spartan fox
> from gnawing at the vitals of
> Prometheus Redridinghood,
> for by the chart in the Big Bear's box
> he is not yet out of the wood.

One has unqualified praise for these words, addressed by Jupiter to Juno:

> . . . here beneath the sight
> of One who flies yet loftier than I
> who am of ye the greatest do I cry:

" Oh love, oh love ! that is the top of heaven
" see these our follies. Let us not despair !
" Words are but words, dear love, without thy leaven
" as without God the winds but tangled air
" and only dust the earth and only smoke
" the heavenly vapours that should be God's cloak."

It is difficult to form an estimate of the impression likely to be made on the world by Mr. William A. Younger's poems in *Inconstant Conqueror* (Hutchinson, 5s.). Poem by poem they present a strong similarity in the look of the lines on the printed page. This is equalled by a similarity in the thought and emotion of the poems. It is, of course, the latter similarity that strikes the mind of the reader first. He then notices that not a few of the poem-titles run together : thus there are three titles in which the word " symphony " is found. He passes from that point to one when he questions how many would be aware of it, if one, reading this or that poem aloud, were to interpolate a passage from another poem ; then a passage from still another. Thus stimulated, he may be led to seek for the poem presenting the greatest degree of dissimilarity to the rest. I found it for myself in *Poem of Two Days* :

(The First Day)
Kai-tu, in a dress of tissued silk,
hesitates along the wall like a silver flame
blown down burning the hours.

Kai-tu, with quick silvered fingertips,
binds Time like the flame of white water laid
to a white streak in the green jade.

Then evening falls
aslant the whispering lines of walls.

(The Night)
The candlelight, cold as her sixteen years,
kneels on the silver ring she wears
like the incantation of her tears.

Her thin dress falling like a cloak
mocked the trailing candlesmoke,
entranced me till the grey dawn broke.

The rest of the poem is the Second Day. A clue is given to the poem's significance by these words of Dante put as a motto :

. . . volontieri
Parlerei a quei due che insieme vanno.

If one were to compile another Oxford Book of Modern Verse, drawing poems from the men and women whose verse Mr. Yeats ignored, undertaking to make it more a world's loved anthology than the one the Oxford University Press has given us, Mr. Edmund Casson's *Poems* (Warne, 8s. 6d.) would be a book to draw from. An exceedingly moving poem is *Desiderium*:

I shall come never to the waste wild moorland,
When my sad feet an unreturning way
Pass down to Dis. O sandy dune, O poor land
Of nettle and thorn-tree, that I might see a day

Unending, where in sun and wind the thistle
Sheds on the sand its down, and the sea-thrift
Flowers in the hot noon, and sea-swallows whistle,
And over the blue deep floats the soft sea-drift!

O Duddon and Walney! Black Combe stands at leaguer,
The vast rock fortress of the Cumbrian earth.
That I were as God, or sea, or wind, that eager
Fleet over wave and heav'n, soil of my birth!

Speaking in his inaugural lecture on the "moderns," *Poetry and the Moderns*, the Oxford Professor of Poetry glances first at other living poets, saying:

> That there are scattered over these islands traditional poets of possibly greater natural powers and of higher accomplishment and performance than this new movement (as it is called) in poetry can yet easily show, or has had time to breed, I should not dream of denying; nor that a large number of the new poets write very ill indeed, in language only approximately English, and in styles which seem addressed neither to the brain nor to the marrow.

Mr. Casson is one of those traditional poets.

Mr. Francis Berry's new poem, *The Iron Christ* (Williams and Norgate, 1s. 6d.), presents immense difficulties. It deals with an event in South American history: the peaceful settlement, through religious intervention, of a threatened war between Chile and Argentine. The theme and scope demand a rather different approach from his. Primarily, there is too much concession to the ideal that is responsible for the present tragedy being enacted in many parts of Europe. It is a commonplace of psychology (naturally not understood by its worshippers) that the power-complex is a form of over-compensation and thus a symptom of maladjustment. There is in this epic poem a curious attempt to transform the Christ of true power, spiritual power, into a symbol of false power, the material and temporal. And the sermon, on which we are told in the brief foreword the whole drama turns, is a startling theological and ethical

blunder. In this realm the author is perilously insecure. The quality of genius is always the predominant note in Mr. Berry's work, but genius alone is not enough. The youthful Shelley blundered gravely in *Queen Mab*. It is the weakness, not the strength, of genius to allow poetic fervour to override the self-critical faculty, and forget that the intellect, used in the service of the imagination, can be the most powerful of weapons.

The vivid and powerful imagery, the gift of brilliant natural description and strange imaginative powers that always make Mr. Berry's work outstanding, are here in full measure, although sometimes the preponderance of adjectives weakens the effect. There are also some keenly perceptive passages on the psychology of war, as in the lines :

> . . . Then they can forget
> The million drabbest crises of the home,

a point aptly stressed also in Mr. Aldous Huxley's recent valuable book, *Ends and Means*.

The longest and the most attractive of the poems in Mr. Rostrevor Hamilton's new volume, *Memoir* 1887–1937 (Heinemann, 5s.) is the one which gives the book its title. It tells the life-story of a woman from her childhood at the age of ten, through her girlhood, her time of being wooed, her wedded life, motherhood, widowhood, till her death at fifty. Among all her suitors she chose a plain, blunt soldier. She was and continued to be deeply in love with him, but spiritually they were in different worlds. Her gradual awakening to the knowledge that he can never even dimly realize that there are magic casements which she can open at will, is set out with the art of a true poet.

> But since she found in him no help, no weakest
> Shadowy mirror
> To glass her own
> Exquisite skies well-known
> (He being native to his one world only),
>
> Her two worlds' conflict broke more fierce upon her ;
> Parted asunder
> Image and fact,
> Mind's dream and body's act ;
> Wounded the wholeness of her life past healing.
>
> So did the virtue ebb from love's embraces ;
> Little, endearing
> Comedies lost
> Enchantment ; laughter cost,
> Absurdly, being undertoned with sadness.

The curious and interesting stanza used in this and several of the other poems is Mr. Hamilton's own invention.

A few of the poems are in a mood which I have not previously observed in Mr. Hamilton's poetry. He seems occasionally to "go metaphysical." I cannot say that these were the ones I liked best. But difficult and obscure poetry is temporarily in fashion, and these may easily prove the most acceptable in certain quarters.

The Kings of Min Zaman, by C. R. Ashbee (Oxford U.P., 7s. 6d.), in the form of a dialogue about great spiritual matters between the author and Mahmud, a Muslim, arose out of the special interest that there lay for Mr. Ashbee in the reaction of the Great War upon the Eastern mind. "The Orient," he explains,

> "that had brought the great faiths, and so many of the Kings of Min Zaman [i.e., of Long Ago], kept saying to us: 'So this is where your Western Science has led us?'"

Mr. Ashbee himself was first led to a tavern. "It was first," one reads on an earlier page,

> "a very simple-minded *bawwab* or doorkeeper who showed me the way. Bidden by his master to say how, as he could not read, he spent his evenings, he answered: 'I like to hear told of the kings of Long-ago.' So also did I; and a kindly Shaikh took me with him to the tavern in the 'Abbasieh quarter in Cairo where an old rhapsodist (a *sha'ir*), with a one-stringed fiddle, and another—the two looked like Dürer models of medieval saints—sat on a table together and chanted the 'Tale of 'Antar,' the dark Odysseus of the desert."

When was the *Bhagavad Gita* written? Say, we do not know, but only that it was certainly long ago. Also it was written in Hindu India. It was written far in time and in space, and in all kinds of time and space, from a twentieth-century Near East dialogue of our time. One could never expect *The Kings of Min Zaman* to recall the *Bhagavad Gita* to a reviewer. Yet it does. That is not to say that it was from first to last in Mr. Ashbee's mind. What was was that which must connect any two deep spiritual dialogues from their common origin in the unchanging spirit of Man. When one remarks that *The Kings of Min Zaman* recalls the *Bhagavad Gita*, one intends the highest praise.

The writing in *The Garden of Disorder* by Charles Henri Ford, No. VI of *Europa Poets* (Europa Press, 5s.), is the clever kind. It runs like this—

> Perfume the clock, and the cricket will take care of Aunt Bess,
> but the poet forgot to put on his odor-proof vest:
> how staunch the scent of words?
> Dilute the sadistic monopoly's
> whirlpool that twisted
> the artist out of all recognition:
> he will trail the secret brook
> that runs with the fragrance of perdition.

Take " cricket," " aunt Bess," " monopoly," " brook," and " perdition," or even any other six words; mix them well with certain others, adding pepper and salt (as " sadistic ") at discretion; serve hot. Or proceed the other way about, as they do in France. That is the sovereign recipe.

The writing in Mr. Denis Devlin's *Intercessions*, No. V of *Europa Poets* (Europa Press, 3s. 6d.), is much of the same cleverness. A fair example is:

Let me be always in this state of grace
Keep me going on bribes like this, the unfinished handiwork of sunset
Be to me also for a sign
Of burgled outhouses round an inviolable family stone
As a priest uncertain among his mysteries when a bending candle-flame provokes forbidden images

Specially noteworthy is the cleverness of leaving out all full stops and only once in a while putting a comma.

R. G. Duff makes his own small contribution to the poems on flowers in *Flower Songs* and in *Nature Poems* (Blackwell, 1s. 6d. each). The poems are often lilting and fanciful, yet can steady down to the graver movement and deeper thought of a sonnet, as in " The Mole and the Snowdrop ":

The snowdrop, pale with dreams of Paradise,
What doth she of her heavenly beauty show
To the hungry mole, burrowing below
In the dark earth? Doth he at all surmise
The shining wonder, that close-hidden lies,
Locked in the little bulb he pushes so
Scornful aside? Doth any glory glow
Through that pale casket to his blinded eyes?

Sweeter than any snowdrop dreams the soul
From her frail body rooted in the earth,
And snowy petals, too, she doth unroll,
Until in heaven a perfect flower hath birth. . . .

I touch your body. . . . Ah, if I could guess
How sways, above, your soul's white loveliness!

Mr. Spender's greatest achievement in *Trial of a Judge* (Faber, 5s.) is to have written his tragedy in the language of our own time, raised to poetry, and not in a fake of Shakespeare's diction; not in lines like Tennyson's.

In this low pulse and palsy of the state,

but in lines as alive as:

As the helmeted airman regards
Through the glazed focus of height
The bistre silent city abandoned like a leaf
With veins in microscopic detail beneath him,
So from my towered pause of death,
O sweet carrier of life, my riveted eye looks
Thirty years forward when your child is grown.
Imagine if the children of this hour
Grew free of the treelike shadows of their parents
Falling across them with the fate of envy
And with roots of greed that clutch their hearts.
O leaves in sunlight, O more fortunate houses,
O faces in the street. O lights . . . I die . . . .

One has known more poetic verse ; but it is a gain to break away from a dead convention.

As for Mr. Spender's play itself, it is based on a known incident in recent German history ; but an incident of which to speak too plainly would be but to provoke hostility, and hostility in the political camp ; not in the arena where the questions raised by a drama are purely dramatic questions. Another, a more skilled playwright than Mr. Spender, if given the incident in question as matter for a stage play, would have seen his opportunity, without subduing his interest in the political and social issues involved, to create living characters, breathing men and women. Mr. Spender's interest in those issues was either too strong, or his power of characterization is too weak, to permit of that. In consequence, all the speeches of the *dramatis personae* are dictated by the political parts they are given to play, and the persons themselves belong nearly as much to types as the figures do in a Morality. You cannot, without the book, or without looking at the figures on the stage to see which one is speaking, distinguish character from character by the words heard. No repeated seeing of the play, up to half a dozen times, would fix in the mind, barring some striking accident of association, who it is to whom are given the words:

. . . who shall pay
Statesmen who make a literal candle
Of blazing parliaments ?
Dons whose learning heaps
The living leaves of art upon a bonfire
In public squares under the eyes of statues,
Those lenses of the snow, through death's cold nothing
Staring at madness ?

The words are spoken by a woman, and they are too like

And art made tongue-tied by authority,
And folly—doctor-like—controlling skill,

for any one to have known that. But it is good, whoever speaks them, to have such words said. The friends of the dons may protest :

we do not. Mr. Spender's achievement deserves more study than one is afraid it will be given.

There is an error on the jacket of Christopher Hassall's verse-play *Christ's Comet* (Heinemann's, 6s.), with respect to a performance of it last summer, but we hear on good authority that this remarkable contribution to poetic drama will be produced at Canterbury this summer. After recent experiments in this form, *Christ's Comet* is a refreshing reversion to the concrete, elevated, sustained verse-play, with admirable characterization and dignity. Herod is a suspicious tyrant, but never a buffoon; the fourth wise man, who did not need to visit Bethlehem because he had already recognized the significance of the star, remained a sublime, simple searcher after truth, with never a descent into bathos or an aside indicating that he actually thinks himself a fool—a poetic drama that will be found convincing, moving, beautiful, because it does not condescend to modern devices nor palters with the truth nor depends for effect on the grotesque or trivial.

Behind two of three biographies under discussion this month the background of the subject plays an important part. The third is a life of Robert Burns, *The Ranting Dog*, by John Lindsey (Chapman and Hall, 15s.). Here the background is less noticeable, being the countryside of Ayrshire; and Burns was a very product of the soil—a people's poet if ever there was one. They are rare. It was his great human-ness that was and is his genius, so that his songs are known and loved by those in every rank of life. If to John Lindsey, who gives us the Burns of greatness and of frailty, it is almost a case of "the gods can do no wrong," we Englishers need perhaps go no further than to admit the godship and willingly give the toleration that genius demands. He does not attempt to analyse Burns' poetry; it is one of the great simplicities that defies analysis.

In a fourth book, *The Miltonic Setting*, by E. M. W. Tillyard (C.U.P., 7s. 6d.), the keen analysis of Milton's poetry shows it to be definitely influenced in style and content by the religious thought and political situations of the period and yet, as in all great poetry, to reach far forward beyond its own time. Dr. Tillyard seeks to defend Milton against certain detractors of the present day, and no better champion could be found than this distinguished and sympathetic student of Milton who has already made important contributions to that poet's bibliography. His arguments are wholly convincing and aptly illustrated; and his criticism is of that discriminating open-minded kind which does not denounce his opposers as being utterly wrong, but recognizes their point of view and even uses it as complementary testimony sometimes. Their injustices he proves often to be misunderstanding, and he states his own case with persuasiveness as well as firmness.

The background to *Astrophel* by Alfred H. Bill (Cassell, 15s.), is a large canvas filled with the contemporaries of Sir Philip Sidney and all the plots and counterplots, persecutions and reprisals, wars and alarms, of Elizabeth's reign. Sir Philip himself stands out clearly and memorably as "a veray parfit gentle knight." His poetry has had perhaps less fame than his personality and accomplishments, though actually the two are inseparable, and it was not for nothing that writers on diverse subjects in his day dedicated their books to him. Mr. Bill does not aim at going deeper into the Sidney records than previous scholars have done, but rather to present the material collected by them in a more acceptable form to the general reader.

The background of *William Shenstone*, by A. H. Humphreys (C.U.P., 6s.), is his own landscape garden, which secured him more fame than his poetry, and out of it there arises the whole problem of the eighteenth-century horticulturist. The ordered naturalness of his "ferme ornée" was as much a protest against artificiality as Pope's:

> The suff'ring eye inverted Nature sees,
> Trees cut to Statues, Statues thick as trees.

Shenstone's poetry, of the gentle descriptive order, would hardly supply enough material for a whole book perhaps. Mr. Humphreys does not attempt to discuss it, but he gives us the cultural background of this man and his period with a scholar's precision and an artist's interpretation.

The Edward Thomas revival is stimulated by a fragment of autobiography, which carries us only to his sixteenth year, when education was just beginning, but when his character appears to have been definitely formed (Faber, 6s.). In a preface, a younger brother, Julian, says that Edward "was happy neither at home nor at school. Like all his brothers, he was the despair of his parents, a mystery to both father and mother. To my father he owed more than he would ever admit, in especial the art of reading aloud, and through this the appreciation of poetry. . . . Once or twice, when I was a small boy ill in bed, he read to me Kipling's *Kabul River* and Tennyson's *The Passing of Arthur*. I was entranced. He read in an almost unaccentuated monotone, slowly, clearly, so that not one word, not one shade of meaning was lost. Many years later he read aloud his first poems to me; and then, all too soon, that voice was stilled."

This scrap of autobiography shows Edward Thomas at his best as a prose writer—limpid, direct, unaffected—and will be received as a complete piece of distinguished writing. He does not present himself as a peculiarly unusual lad. All but indifferent to games, he was always a keen entomologist and although fettered by considerable reserve and delicacy and the lack of vocal expression, he had a facility for writing and was always responsible to the music of words. At about twelve, "Shakespeare's plays and Leigh Hunt's *Abou Ben*

Adhem did help me to feel that there was something for men besides eating and drinking and getting a living or having it got for you," and this feeling developed into a conviction.

I Crossed the Minch is the typical title of Mr. Louis Macneice's latest medley of prose and verse, fact and fable (Longmans, 10s. 6d.). He seems to think it is important that he should have crossed the Minch but does not advance any adequate reasons for our being interested in this notable achievement—a little gossip about the Western Islanders whom he did not understand because he confesses he knew no Gaelic and a good deal about long walks and how he passed the night at the end of each one—scarcely more illuminating than the *Letters from Iceland* which have infuriated not only those who wish to admire him and his colleague but also the Iceland people. Certainly Mr. Macneice admits that " this is the book of a tripper, a person concerned with the surface," to which he appends somewhat irrelevent remarks about communism and civilization and a dialogue in verse between his head and his foot and a ballad life of Viscount Leverhulme, which has been praised as being very good stuff—

" Lord Leverhulme was a grocer's son
He learned to sell when he was young,
And all the tune that he could play
Was ' Advertising makes it pay '—
Over the hills and across the skies,
By God it pays to advertise. . . .

Nearing seventy Lever said,
' Just one more coup before I'm dead ;
I'll help those lame dogs over their stiles.
I'll stamp my name on the Western Isles.' . . .
All that remained at Lever's death
Was a waste of money and a waste of breath.

Only to be reassured by St. Peter in heaven that

" The Scottish Islands are a rotten deal,
Those Celts are terribly difficile ;
We find them unwilling to pull their weight
When we let them in at the Golden Gate.

No one here will consider it
The least reflection on your native wit
That the ignorant crofters, penny-wise,
Should have sabotaged your enterprise.

So welcome now to the realms divine
And sign your name on the dotted line.
You'll find the life up here a spree
For Heaven is a joint-stock company."

Testament by Martha Wilson (Richards Press, 5s.) is a remarkable first book of poems, comprising a sonnet sequence of fifty-eight examples, naturally of varying merit but all soundly constructed and full of interest. The sonnets have fire and colour and are tinged with a deep passion and stamped with sincerity all through. They make refreshing reading in an age which seems to fear emotion even in verse; and even if there is here too little astringency for the taste of those who prefer their vintages dry, that we think is a fault more cordial than the dry and shrivelled anaemia which so often to-day masquerades as intellectuality.

There is in the sonnets generally true cohesion and at times certainly, as in the Sonnet,

> " Ride on, O Death, O swift Achilles, thou
> Of iron soul,"

a sure and unswerving control of all the resources that build the majestic music of this lovely and tantalizing verse form. Those who claim that the sonnet is a moribund form in which no more notable or interesting examples can be produced, may think again and read among others this example:

> Sink, O my Life's Leviathan, if you will,
> To those dark depths where lovers lie forgotten
> Midst pain and pressure brought to bear, until
> What is not blood and flesh, and long since rotten,
> Is the black ooze of nothingness; whilst I,
> Whom weather-prophets promise much and fail,
> Do to the weakening wreckage cling, defy
> The Mariner with whom my heart set sail,
> And clinging live; though well I know the cost
> Of life is death, that ultimately, O Ship,
> She who survives when everything is lost,
> Will to the salt sea water touch her lip,
> Her breathless form a skeleton that cares
> Not on what strange anemone it fares.

An interesting first book of verse is *Gentlemen's Tee* by E. M. Stephenson (Stent, Clarke & Co., Guildford, 5s.). The title, we are told, is a synonym among skiers for courage, and there is in the book courage and a sense of kinship with mountainous heights which make the title a very apt one. The poems are poems of substance rather than of form, and essay free verse as though it were the easiest thing in the world. Sometimes, as in " Any Heavens Adversity," the audacity succeeds; but we think that particular poem, for all its apparent looseness, a very highly wrought one; and that probably explains the temporary subjugation of a most intractable medium.

There is close observation, particularly of wintry and mountainous phenomena:

> " All the night is white and blue
> And street lamps change the snowflakes' hue,

To falling stars in gold."

And again in " Night Snow," which we quote in full :

" Up in the mountain's peace
Lies the dome of its glass-white snow
Unstirred by the mountain's breath
Or soft-tuned songs of night.
While the moon's lips curve
And reaching drink
Of the cool of its infinite might."

The music of this is recondite but it can be heard. From this point of view the poems pass one of the necessary tests of poetry—they read aloud well ; at least they did when we heard Mr. Geoffrey Tandy give a reading from them a few days ago.

If in her next book Mrs. Stephenson adds control of form to the qualities of sincerity and imagination which she now possesses, she may well hope to add something enduring to the stream of poetry.

Joshua Slade by E. H. W. Meyerstein (Richards Press, 7s. 6d.) is one of those slowly unfolding dramas of character rather than of plot which the many admirers of his earlier novels have learned to expect from him. Mr. Meyerstein deals with subtleties which may be called those of the spirit rather than of the mind ; for the theme underlying this work is the influence of the dead, the historic dead, on the living. This is not to say that we are dealing here with spiritualism or anything approaching thereto. The author's treatment is far more subtle, and we feel that this influence rises from within the mind affected, not from without ; from within by an agency which piles up slowly flake by flake and then falls with the sudden force of an avalanche. While at the same time we come to realize how subtle the distinction, how fine the line which—at least in matters affecting the mind and the spirit—lies as a boundary between *within* and *without*.

It is this deep and subtle psychological analysis which gives the book its extraordinary sense of reality and fantasy lying in the same line. We know the characters are real, normal, human, ordinary people. Yet there is over them a strange transmuting veil, real though invisible ; it is as though they had moved through some fourth dimension to a universe of their own, while still remaining visible, their relative proportions unchanged, their absolute relation with ourselves irremediably broken, so that they may be observed indeed, but touched, but apprehended never.

It is a rare degree of mental force that can thus transpose phenomena to the more rarefied mental keys while at the same time preserving all their distinctive lineaments ; that can show us a London and a Huntingdonshire which we feel to be supernatural, while being at the same time compelled in our reasoning minds to recognize them as entirely

normal and natural. This degree of alchemical and transmuting mental power is, we confidently claim, the prerogative of the poet and the musician. And *Joshua Slade* is the novel of a poet.

Not All Sleep by Sheila Radice (Arnold, 7s. 6d.) is more than a novel —it is an imaginative reconstruction, packed with detail, of the story of James Hammond, born in the eighth year of Queen Anne, who published not a line of his own verses yet survives as a philandering poetaster, and who had an unhappy love affair with Kitty Dashwood. It was said in the eighteenth century and the early nineteenth (after which Hammond's poems, their *succès de scandale* ended, went out of print), that their author had died " of love," in a fit of madness, by suicide, or " in a decline,"—always " while on a visit to Lord Cobham at Stowe." His letters in verse to Mrs. Radice's godmother's ancestress Katherine Dashwood, under the name of Delia, published in his memory by Lord Chesterfield, went through many editions, and much was written of him by Johnson and other preface-writers, some spiteful, some sentimental, all misinformed. Thus Mrs. Radice has a personal interest in her subject which was increased by the story of two friends who in June 1928 at Stowe House in Buckinghamshire saw the ghost of a young man, in eighteenth-century garb, walking on the terrace in the moonlight with a young, elaborately dressed woman—the singular inception of a novel which tells with meticulous attention to detail and precision the short life story of this ineffectual young poet and diplomat.

Mr. Edward Shanks has almost every qualification for dealing with England in Jarrolds' " My Country " series (7s. 6d.); being of high standing as a poet, novelist and critic. This devoted Londoner, whose grandfather was a Lowland Scot, may claim to be a typical Englishman, able to understand and apprise the genius and spirit of our country in a balanced manner most refreshing to read in these days of over-weaning egoism, gross exaggeration and spiteful depreciation of great subjects. To us the gist of *My England* is to be found in the chapter on " England of the Poets," in which Mr. Shanks points out very truly, although at first sight it might be regarded as paradoxical, that whatever the subject, even his country, the Englishman will jeer at and criticize, yet he will not impugn or allow anyone else to impugn the valour of our fighting men or the pre-eminence of our poets. " The Englishman does not need to be a poet himself or even to read poetry to hold it as an article of religious faith that Homer was the greatest of poets only until Shakespeare occurred, and that we can match Shakespeare's distinguished subordinates not merely against any other nation, but against the rest of the world." Mr. Shanks proceeds to show how our poets have both expressed and helped to form our life in England. The man " who maintains the greatness of Shakespeare, Milton, and Wordsworth without reading them, is not

so absurd as he may appear: he is, without any conscious effort of his own, different from what he would have been if they had never written. In just the same way, he may never enter a church between his christening and his funeral, but all the same the Church of England does in some measure express his character and in the same measure has helped to form him." The comparison is not inapt, for our poetry is to us a sort of national religion, "co-extensive in time with our language as we know it." Mr. Shanks proceeds to show that from Langland through Chaucer, whose characteristic introduction to the *Canterbury Tales* "are the real beginning of English poetry," and Shakespeare, down to our own time, the English poets praise their country implicitly, not explicitly. "They praise her by expressing their joy in her; they render her sights and sounds and smells instead of making generalizations." In consequence, this descriptive background peculiar to English poetry shows that preoccupation with the English scene and the English countryside plays a more persistent and important part in our corpus of verse than in that of any other nation. There may be a re-action at present, but we prefer to believe with Mr. Shanks that "the future reality of England will come closer to the old ideal than anything that history has to record. If so, the poets of a century hence will be in a line traceable to Chaucer and Spenser." It is curious that this very English, sensible, urbane, moderate review of our country, its institutions, games, habits and prejudices should be prefaced and defined by a French quotation.

Mr. W. Nightingale Brown, F.R.S.A., M.R.S.L., as an author, journalist and lecturer and member of the National Book Council, is well qualified to provide *The Writer's Own Text Book* (Heath Cranton, 3s. 6d.)—a practical volume on the art and craft of authorship. Almost the whole field of literary expression is adequately analysed and illustrated with strict regard to practical purposes. Good advice is given to the verse-writer, accompanied by directions how to prepare MSS., but Mr. Brown does not appear to mention the tendency of so many writers to annoy the editor by omitting name and address—either one or the other and frequently both—from their precious MSS. They seem to consider that the superfluous covering letter or stamped addressed envelope (the latter, however, frequently omitted) is sufficient for identification purposes. Unless a clerk is specially kept, checking MSS. as they are received and adding name and (or) address when necessary, a too large proportion of MSS. are later found to be unidentifiable—an unnecessary annoyance either way. Another matter of no little importance is the inability of even many experienced contributors to correct their proofs in the simple, formal way required by the printers. We hope free-lancers in particular will make use of this book and will follow Mr. Brown's advice and directions and will make themselves familiar with the proof-reading marks and use the margins clearly and boldly for that purpose.

THE PREMIUM EDITOR'S REPORT.

Miss Radcliffe Binnington has once more contributed several admirable lyrics in the style which is decidedly her own, a style which conveys emotion as well as thought, but in a manner devoid of sentimentality.

We are very glad to see Mr. A. E. Dewey return to this competition with some accomplished work, and Mrs. E. M. Mann has written a short poem of striking power.

Our awards therefore are to : E. Radcliffe Binnington, Louth; Edith Mary Mann, Dovercourt Bay ; and Albert E. Dewey, Ealing.

Amongst those Highly Commended especial mention must be made of T. E. Casson and I. Sutherland Groom.

Highly Commended :

T. E. Casson, Ulverston ;
I. Sutherland Groom, Bristol ;
Redcliffe McKie, Hove ;
Iërne Ormsby, Thurgoland ;
Phoebe Rayner, Rivington ;
Harry Herman Ross, London, W. ;
Brenda F. Skene, London, W. ;
Hilda M. Slade, Ramsgate ;
Margaret E. Stringer, Tipperary ;
Mabel K. Toovey, Amersham ;
Molly Walker, Ripon ;
E.H.W., Whimple ;

Commended :

Elizabeth F. Alden, Haddenham ;
Vera I. Arlett, Worthing ;
Ernest W. Bacon, Chipping Sudbury ;
B. Bell, Barnard Castle ;
Langford Budville, Worthing ;
Cloudrider, Budapest ;
David Delauney, West Willow ;
P. E. C. Duce, York ;
R. G. Duff, Teignmouth ;
Margaret Lockerbie-Goff, London, N. ;
Dulcie Eden Greville, Wakefield ;
Jessie B. Heard, Bristol ;
F. Jennings, Seaford ;
Lawrence W. Hockey, Newport, Mon. ;
A.F.M., Cheltenham ;
Enid W. Mark, S. Croydon ;
Marta Mitrovich, London, W.C. ;
G. E. Merrick, Warminster ;
G. S. Oddy, Ryde ;
B. F. Pargiter, Aldershot ;
E. Curt Peters, Chalfont St. Giles ;
T. Pittaway, Frome ;
Nancy Pollok, Santiago-de-Chile ;
Peri-Schwartz, Roedean ;
H. B. Tasker, Hendon ;
Edith M.Walker, Bournemouth.

Jocelyn de Bruyn, of " The Old Vic," contributes these " Lines in deep appreciation of the memorial by which Violet, late Duchess of Rutland, gave to the world the memory of her son—and of herself:

How pale beside the sacred passion grief
Dims all the glory of unloving art ;

For those who seek one hour of relief
In meditative quiet the Dead impart.
The Dead who died too young—ah, who can hope
To find the depths too deep for strangers' tears,
Where sorrow nurses loss and echoes grope
Around the spinning darkness that enfolds the years.
Dear strange-cold figure of once breathing youth,
Forever hast thou now what Life in giving mars,
The dawn of manhood, cool and fresh and pure;
Her shrine of love that made thy beauty truth,
Inscribed by him whose shining words endure.
They joined with him—in day beyond our stars.

C. Wrey Gardiner (Teignmouth) presents a vivid impression of the John Drinkwater Memorial Reading by Miss Margaretta Scott on January 14th:

As we sat in the still room waiting
For words to fill the quiet air and fall
Into the glass clear mirror of our minds
I felt you there beside me waiting too
Although I never turned my head aside
But listened with all my being to the gold
Bright flood of light that is a poet's words.
And as the burning images were massed,
Thrown to the flashing summit of cascades
I knew the deep communion of the word,
I was no longer in the world alone.

E. Vandermere Fleming chides Fickle Fame, instanced by the resurrection in the twentieth century of John Donne who is represented in *The Golden Treasury* only by a poem of doubtful authenticity.

Slow-footed, recognition and renown
Have often came—whiles to a dead man came[1]
For she, the femininely fickle, Fame,
So scant of smiles, so very free to frown,
To this man cold, to that, fair flatterer,
May half-extend her crown, then hesitate,
Coyly withdraw, toy with it, till too late;
Then flits, to set some other heart astir.

But now and then she finds the burial-place
Of one who wooed but never won her grace:
Woman's inconstancy induces her
This unknown one immortal to proclaim,
And she rebuilds the crumbling sepulchre,
Recarves, and gilds, the obliterated name.

[1]If the archaism "whiles" offends, read:
"Oft come, and once or twice to dead men came."

THE POETRY SOCIETY'S DINNER

THE Poetry Society's dinner on February 24th—the twenty-ninth anniversary of the formation of the Society—was a very agreeable social function. The admirable accommodation provided at the Hans Crescent Hotel, S.W.1 was crowded by a large, distinguished and deeply interested company. The President, Lord Kennet of the Dene, with Lady Kennet (formerly Lady Scott) received the guests; subsequently, in proposing the toast of Poetry, the President in a happy speech spoke with quiet enthusiasm of the progress and development of The Poetry Society in its appeal to all who are in any way interested in poetry and as a constructive influence in individual and national life. He referred with gratification to the international character of that gathering and to the strengthening of cultural bonds with Italy as exemplified by the two visits organized by the Society during the year under review—the Keats-Shelley meeting in Rome and the Dante Pilgrimage to Florence and Ravenna—which had done something at a critical time to promote a better understanding based on the stable grounds of a common interest in and appreciation of the poetic eminence of both countries and their close cultural associations. He threw out a hint that The Poetry Society, being in need of new quarters, would be glad of financial assistance towards turning their immediate needs to their permanent advantage. This was the moment for an attempt to be made to provide premises befitting the dignity and importance of the cause The Poetry Society represented. (As a sequel to the President's remarks, one person present provided the nucleus of an Establishment Fund, to which it is hoped substantial additions will be made.)

The toast was responded to by several representative speakers—the Hon. Harold Nicolson, M.P., taking the place of the Rt. Hon. W. S. Morrison, M.P., who was prevented at the last moment by ministerial duties from attending the dinner. Mr. Nicolson, in a lively speech, attacked the type of poetry once largely used in schools. "Why," he asked, "should not little boys be taught simple, good poetry? Why not teach them to recite, for instance, 'Loveliest of Trees the Cherry Now'? It is not very great, but it is surely better than 'The Boy Stood on the Burning Deck.' The Poetry Society ought to be able to prevent little boys from being forced to read things which are pure doggerel, and from being deprived of things which, however simple, are pure poetry. It is hoped that you will help in the rescue of the young from the appalling doggerel which I was taught as a boy."

Mr. Nicolson said great poets told many lies about their early impressions. Invariably, in their biographies, one read that story of how the little boy climbed out of his bed in the attic of the old rectory, crept downstairs, and from the bookshelf in his father's study pulled out that dear old folio, Spenser's "Faerie Queene," and conned it by the light of a candle. "I don't believe that any boy—any decent little boy—ever read the *Faerie Queene*," he added.

Miss Ruth Pitter, in the course of an admirable speech, the substance of which is printed as a separate article in this issue, pointed out: I have been asked to speak this evening by virtue of having received last year's Hawthornden prize for my book of poems, *A Trophy of Arms*. This award, which I little expected, has brought me a whole world of new interest, and not a little hard work, but the most important effect, I find, is that my work is now subjected to much closer scrutiny by competent critics, and I can see that my days of cheerful irresponsibility are over.

"I have been particularly honoured and pleased by the article on my book contributed to last September's issue of your unique journal, THE POETRY REVIEW, by Miss Dallas Kenmare, herself an accomplished poet, and one of those most active in the service of poetry. This article, in addition to its generous and unselfish praise, delighted me by the painstaking study of the work it evinced, and by the wealth of learning on the subject of poetry which is evident throughout its considerable length. How utterly different this appears from the cynically perfunctory work of the average critic. Whether one is to be praised or condemned, it should always be obvious that the critic has at least read the work, and has appreciated it for what it is worth to him.

"It has been thought appropriate that I should read something from the book which was awarded the prize. I will therefore repeat to you a poem which has a particular interest for myself. It is about a bird, and it contains a sharp visual image of that bird; and yet I composed it while I had temporarily lost my eyesight as the result of an accident. During this time the incident which the poem relates, and which had been almost forgotten, came before me with such distinctness that it seemed I could see every detail with supernatural clearness, a clearness much greater than if the objects had been actually present and visible to my sight." Miss Pitter then read "Stormcock in Elder."

His Excellency Count Raczynski (the Polish Ambassador) followed with special reference to the International aspects of Poetry, thereby following the distinguished example of his predecessor, Count Skirmunt, for many years a vice-president of The Poetry Society, to whom Count Raczynski paid a high tribute before proceeding to tell how in war and peace poetry had inspired his nation and remained an active force with many influential exponents, some of whom had gained an international reputation and others deserved it.

His Excellency D. Caclamanos followed with special reference to the notable Byron anniversary, with which that social gathering was associated. His excellency said, "We are assembled here to-day to celebrate a double jubilee, the twenty-ninth birthday of The Poetry Society and the 150th birthday of a great English poet—Byron. Having the honour and the privilege to give you the Byron's birthday toast, I will confine myself, in relation to The Poetry Society and its

activities, to say only that the Society honours itself by honouring the memory of the poet on the occasion of his birthday. But I will be more lengthy on Byron. I am afraid that I must be rather critical—not upon him—how could I take such licence?—I shall be critical about his critics. As a matter of fact, two unexpected misfortunes befell Byron—after his death. He is no longer considered as a poet. It was denied to him to have been a philhellene.

"It would be presumptuous of me to take up the defence of the poetical fame of Byron. Nor am I unaware of the deep change in the conception of poetical art occurred within the time after the death of Byron, and that of romanticism. Our ideas of poetry are now very different from those prevailing in the romantic period of the nineteenth century. The ethereal, pellucid spirituality of the poetry of Shelley and Keats, his contemporaries suggestive rather than expressive in its essence, with its twilight intuition appeals much more to modern readers than the glamour of the lyrical cymbal, the Byronian verse. Modern poetry tries to justify more and more the precept of Coleridge: 'Poetry gives most pleasure,' he said, 'when only generally and not perfectly understood.' The place to be assigned to many of its latest productions lies between music and silence. This kind of poetry, fllimsy as gossamer and delicate as a butterfly's wing, is not of course the poetry of Byron. But how to admit that Byron is not also a great poet, when in every one of his lines, simple or intense or exquisite or solemn or even satanic, you have to recognize and feel the move of high inspiration, the spell of the demon haunting the soul? To remind here the beautiful comparison of Sir Walter Scott: 'Byron is to be compared to the sculpture of a beautiful elaborate vase, only seen to perfection when lighted from within.'

"Moreover, it was wittily said, that England is so rich in poetical glories that Englishmen may indulge in the national luxury of not considering Byron as a great poet, or even as a poet at all! Still a great part of Byron's poetry, at least will remain among the treasures of the spiritual heirloom of the English race. It evokes the deepest of sensations, brings tears to the eyes of even the unemotional, displays descriptions unsurpassed in liveliness, and last but not least, it raised the English language to a rare strength and perfection of form. The agitated spirit itself of the epoc of Byron cries, sings and laughs through his rhymes.

"It is now time not to delay any longer in coming to the case of Byron as a philhellene. The new theory developed on the subject by one of the most brilliant authors of the present generation, does not indulge in nuances. It does not admit anything but deception, weariness of body and lassitude of mind for actuating Byron to go to Greece and help the long-enslaved nation in its rising against the dominator. 'It would be idle," Mr. Harold Nicolson says, 'to pretend that Byron set out upon this his last journey with any very

spirited enthusiasm, either for the cause which he was embracing, or for the particular functions which he would be called upon to fulfil. Nor it would be honest to portray as some reckless Elizabethan, intent upon the gain and glory of a new endurance, the irresolute and dyspeptic little man, who, on that July evening, limped gloomily up the gangway of the *Hercules* '," the brig taking him to Greece.

" Such a definite and unalloyed pronouncement, defies, in my opinion, a bulk of recorded facts, characteristic of a man of manifold experiences, and a subject of the most complicated psychology. It ignores the quixotic side of the character of Byron. It puts aside also the lovely memories of the youth of the poet, gained from his first visit to Greece and faithfully kept by him during his lifetime, his inclination to help the weak and the friendless. It overlooks the frequent references of Byron in his poems to Greece and her liberation, and lastly his ambition which he never abandoned, even amidst wild pleasures and debaucheries. As for deception, Byron was disillusioned from his early youth, if not from his very childhood, and to consider his ' gloomy ' embarkation for Greece as actuated by a mere despair mixed with a sad premonition of death, one would ask when was Byron during his whole life, entirely happy or without superstition ? Actually, he lived on sadness and superstitions.

" Why also forget that Byron, when visiting Greece in the dawn of his glorious youth, had been struck by the profound contrast between the ever living splendour of classical memories, or the perennial beauty of the immortal monuments of the country, and a race which living amidst them, seemed unmindful of the traditions and the glories of the past, including the ancestral love for liberty ? The view of the desolate plain or the blue bay, where civilization has twice beaten the barbarian invasion, inspired in him verses by which he pours his contempt upon men unaware (as I thought) of their duty, but at the same time he dreams in his song of the liberty of the country :

> The mountains look on Marathon,
> And Marathon looks on the sea,
> And musing there one hour alone,
> I dreamt that Greece might still be free.
> For standing on the Persian's grave
> I could not deem myself a slave.

" As a matter of fact, the thought of a Greek rising was a living hope with him, It roused him and his enthusiasm when materialized and what have been his last words faintly whispered, when he lay dying near to the fatal lagoon of Missolonghi ? ' Greece, oh Greece ! . . . I have given thee my time, my means, my health ! and now I give thee my life ! . . . What could I do more ? '

" I don't know, ladies and gentlemen, any more pitiless indictment of Byron, as a poet as well as a man, than that by a distinguished scholar, pronounced some years ago in a brilliant lecture at Oxford.

He sneered even at the legendary fame the poet enjoys in Greece and the adoration in which the Greek Nation keeps his name. Speaking of the London celebrations of the centenary of the death of Byron in 1924, he uses the word of 'boom,' 'combined (he said) between journalists seeking wisdom and Greeks desiring a loan,' and he thinks that a 'boom' had been produced. As there is not now any reasonable prospect or hope for a Greek loan in the London Market, I am not afraid to be a little here relieved as I am from the fear that I may be accused of being an accomplice in any 'boom.'

"Byron, I must say, now definitely ranks amongst the noblest of Greek National heroes. From the humblest cottage to the most sumptuous mansions of Greece, his name is everywhere worshipped. He is more than a chapter in Modern Greek History; he is a part of Greek National Legend. A thousand years hence Greeks shall speak of him as we speak to-day of Achilles and Ajax. Who knows then if a new Greek rhapsodist may not arise one day to tell his tale in some neo-Hellenic rhymes? I am honoured as well as glad to stand up here to-night amongst such a distinguished company and amidst so many lovers of poetry, to raise my glass to the 'Memory of Byron'—or may I be allowed to say, as a devoted fellow-lover of poetry, and as a Greek, 'To the Immortal Memory of Byron'."

Sir Paul Dukes, who also responded, said that, as a layman, he felt that the highest function of poetry was that it transported us over the boundary of the ordinary into the realm of the marvellous, thus making the marvellous the real. The truly poetic imagination was ever ready to endow even the simplest things of life with a new and living meaning. He aroused amusement by reminding his hearers that poets had often poked fun at themselves, and quoted Pope's lines:

We poets are (upon a poet's word)
Of all mankind the creatures most absurd.

Seers often appeared absurd to their contemporaries, and a further function of the poet was to be a seer. It seemed to the speaker that, as seers, the poets of several parts of the world were to-day at a disadvantage. Wagons were hitched to forced political slogans instead of freely to stars. But true poets could never become mental robots, and he agree with Francis Thomson that

There is no expeditious road
To pack and label men for God
And save them by the barrel-load.

Speaking in Russian and giving subsequently his own English rendering, he quoted the poet Tiucheff as evidence that the free realm of the poet is to be understood by faith alone. In this respect he believed the free poets of Britain had a special rôle to play in the present day and age, and he concluded by quoting the words of John Milton:

" Let not England forget her precedence of teaching other nations how to live."

The health of the Chairman was proposed by Sir Campbell Mitchell-Cotts, Bart., a member of the Council of The Poetry Society, who spoke most warmly of Lord Kennet's eminence in politics and finance and his distinguished naval career, which were in consonance with his devotion to poetry and his own skill and artistry as a poet, Sir Campbell reciting most movingly Lord Kennet's poem, " A Boy was Born in Bethlehem," which has become the possession of thousands of young people through The Poetry Society's use of it in their verse-speaking auditions and by its inclusion in many anthologies. In the course of the evening, Miss Joan Eastman, the Lady Margaret Gold Medallist of the year and Miss Delphine Petters, last year's Lady Margaret Medallist, spoke appropriate poems by Shelley, Byron and John Drinkwater.

Ave atque Vale

We regret to have to record the passing of several prominent members of The Poetry Society—Sir Henry Newbolt, who had been a Life Member and Vice-President since August 1912, Mr. F. Irving Taylor, a member of the General and Executive Councils for a similar period, Sir Reginald Johnston, K.C.M.G., the distinguished Chinese scholar and administrator, and Sir Mohammed Iqbal, the poet of Islam.

Sir Henry Newbolt gave great encouragement to The Poetry Society in its early days: on one occasion, presiding at a dinner of the Kensington Centre, he recognized that the Society through its regular centre meetings provided the best possible university course in poetry, and the Anglo-American Peace Centenary poetry meeting at Hyde Park House, at which he presided, made a particular appeal to his historic as well as poetic sense. To The Poetry Society Sir Henry was a veritable Companion of Honour. Through his poems, Sir Henry moulded the present generation more than any other contemporary poet; the pamphlet, *Admirals All*, published in 1927, containing twelve spirited poems, immediately established his fame, and no poems have been more widely and effectively used in schools and among young people: they have sublimated the " old school tie." The throbbing words of " Vita Lampada," the vivid story of " He Fell among Thieves," the devotion of " Clifton Chapel," the heroic appeal of " Drake's Drum," have warmed the blood and stiffened the backs of boys and men for a generation and built up the English spirit and conduct, not only in public schools but in a wider democracy throughout the elementary schools of the country. As was well said in an obituary notice: " He found words for men who do not usually talk much about themselves and he put into poetry which Englishmen love the ideas which they like to put into practice." He did other

services to poetry, too, as a very delicate, cultured critic and editor. His New Study of English Poetry and New Paths on Helicon have exercised a wide formative influence.

F. Irving Taylor was another of our own particular companions of honour, a very loyal friend and advocate and conscientious, dependable councillor, keenly alive to the achievement and greatness of The Poetry Society. A sturdy independent Ulsterman and an old Fleet Street man, for many years on the staff of the *Evening Standard* and with wide journalistic experience in Canada and the United States, poetry was his real metier and life work; his stately, sonorous ode, selected from many others in competition by Mr. Alfred Noyes for reading at the Poets' Descendents' Dinner in 1910, gave him a reputation for grave, serious, flexible work, and only recently in THE POETRY REVIEW tribute was paid to his great epic "Azal and Edras," which that severe and fearless critic, T. W. H. Crosland, highly-esteemed, placing it in some respects above Milton's magnificent work. Taylor may be said to have died adumbrating peace,—the ultimate subject of his impressive allegory, on the revision of which, as well as of plays, centred on the same great inspiration, he was working when he had to undergo an operation under which he collapsed.

Sir Muhammad Iqbal, of Lahore, was the greatest Urdu and Persian poet of our day. An appreciation of him by Moulvi Sahib Syed Hashimi was published in the July-August 1936 POETRY REVIEW, with an English version by Prof. E. E. Speight of Sir Muhammad's verse message to our Hyderabad (Deccan) Centre.

Charles Dalmon, described by *The Times* as a Poets' Poet, died on March 27th in the Charterhouse at the age of 66. He was Sussex-born, of village stock, and (as his poems show) was proud of his county and of the measure of Romany blood that ran in his veins. In early manhood he sought for literary work in London, and after much hardship was reduced very nearly to starvation before the tide of his fortunes turned. An appointment in the library of the Post Office gave him a livelihood for some years, and at the age of 20 he produced his first book of poems, *Minutiae*. This was the book which, "at the earnest entreaty of a stranger," Tennyson looked over a month or two before his death, and "crossed out Mr. Dalmon's despairing words about poetry—'The end is failure.'" Three years later Dalmon was on the fringe of the *Yellow Book* group, and John Lane published his second book of verse, *Song Favours*. In 1900 followed *Flower and Leaf*, after which more than twenty years were to pass before the fourth book, *A Poor Man's Riches*, came out in 1922, with a note on Dalmon and his poetry written in 1914 by Edward Thomas. His last book, *Singing as I go*, came out in 1927. From the first Dalmon's poetry had appealed to other poets by its beautiful delicacy, simplicity, and lyrical purity. He once thought of giving to his

second book the title of "Oaten Stop," and Collins's phrase would have well suited Dalmon's rural muse, which had something of Herrick in it, but with less heartiness and more tenderness and fineness of spirit.

The 10th RAWNSLEY GOLD MEDAL Competition on March 26th, was judged by Miss A. R. Morison, O.B.E., who in the course of her remarks said: I think in some respects the standard is a high one. Of course I need not say to an audience like this that there are three people you can think about when reading a poem—yourself, the audience and the poet. Self must be ruled out, and the person to be thought about is the poet and his message—and in a reading that message has to be got over to the audience—there has to be an appeal to the audience, however little, when reading at sight. There must be that sympathy between the reader and the audience—intelligent interpretation of the message, realization of the mood of the poem and a pleasing and audible voice. The pitch of the voice is most important and the power of adjusting that pitch to the size of the room. This has been a verse-reading competition and in this, above all other things, the reader must observe those bonds of *rhythm*, which the poet chose for the form of his poem—as in music one must observe the time and rhythm of the composition. Therefore the reader must observe a suspension at the end of the line and make it clear that he is reading not prose, but poetry.

Most of the diction was very good and generally speaking the reading was clear and audible. In some cases the pitch of the voice was too high and harsh and nothing detracts more from the beauty of reading. In two cases there was a lack of naturalness and simplicity which gave a forced effect.

The poems chosen by the ten candidates gave an excellent field for variety and scope for intelligent interpretation. The two chief defects were the failure to do justice to the *mood* of the poem and the lack of real appreciation of the beauty of rhythm. In this important point, as in audibility and sympathetic rendering of the poems, Miss Millicent Locke, the winner of the medal, surpassed the other candidates—though, even in her case, the mood was not quite caught and Shelley's skylark remained too near the ground for that "blithe spirit." Miss Kathleen Phillips was *proxime accessit*.

The principal of an important girls' school, in acknowledging the results of a recent Verse-Speaking examination, states: The examiner's remarks and report are *most* helpful, and I am so grateful to the Poetry Society for this encouragement and advice.

The Marchesa Niccolini, the Contessa Rucelli, Sir Hugh Walpole, Sir Paul Dukes and Mrs. Lilie Zortman (vice-president of the National Bookfellows Association of America) have been elected Vice-Presidents of The Poetry Association (Incorporated).

POETIC ESSENTIALS

POETRY has become for a time the handmaid of Bright Young Things and of the advanced journalism. In this medium Stevie Smith (Miss or Mr., I don't know which) displays to-day the most exquisite cleverness and a knowledge of foreign languages which is truly amazing. In this medium again Auden, Madge, Heppenstall, Bottrall, Spender, Warner, Barker, to name but a few, coruscate with a dazzling brilliance and virtuosity, a satiric power and incisiveness which is matched only by their lack of substance; and which so dazzles the reader that he hardly notices the absence of what he had once in his innocence supposed to be poetry—the sort of things that Homer and Catullus and Dante and Villon used to write.

It is time to make ourselves a little more explicit. If we feel that Dante is poetry and that eighty per cent. of Auden, Barker and the rest is not, we must be prepared to explain why. For we have a good deal of cultivated opinion against us; and the fact that it has been assiduously cultivated, with all the resources of modern publicity, will not entitle us entirely to disregard it.

It is impossible to arrive at this point without coming up against the difficulty which every wise person naturally shirks as long as he can: the difficulty of attempting a definition of poetry. Because that is an undertaking which compares in difficulty and usefulness with the attempt to catch sand in a herring seine. It is easy to say what poetry is to oneself; it is comparatively easy to say what poetry is not in general; it is by no means so easy to give a general definition.

If we were to attempt such a definition in the Aristotelian sense, we should find little difficulty as regards the genus: for poetry is obviously a form of self-expression in writing. It is when we come to the differentiae, or essential differences from other forms of writing, that our troubles begin. For these accidents have differed from age to age; and to-day we might easily take our choice of half-a-dozen, each with its clamant coterie of followers.

The particular accidental difference which has persisted most strongly through time is probably the musical

difference—that poetry is to be distinguished from other forms of writing in having its stresses and cadences placed in fairly close agreement with some pre-arranged pattern, which should always be discernible at least as a skeleton on which the verbal structure is built. The type of pattern selected does not affect the issue.

A further difference which many people feel more or less strongly is the idea that poetry should be in some way, either by subject or by treatment, nobler than prose. This is a very dangerous distinction to make in this form, because it rules out the undoubted fact that true poems have been written about ordinary things. Also it limits in an arbitrary and needless fashion the scope of poetry, which we feel should be universal.

It would be better perhaps to avoid the word noble and to say that poetry should be extraordinary; in the sense that there should be in a true poem some transmuting quality, arising perhaps from the fire in the mind of the writer, and in virtue of which the ordinary is for the time transformed and seen as something new and strange.

It is mainly in the extent to which this transmutation is successfully carried out that we have the measure of the poetical quality which is sometimes called profundity, and which is a thing quite distinct from philosophical or purely intellectual profundity. The latter will always have its best exposition in prose, because emotional stress is nearly always a powerful reagent in the poetical transmutation.

It is obvious that poetry being a form of communicated expression clarity is an essential feature, as indeed it is also in prose. Clarity, of course, does not mean facility any more than obscurity necessarily connotes profundity. It means this: that a concept, a meaning is to be conveyed, and that meaning must be clear at least to the poet and preferably to as many other intelligent people as possible. Dante says in *Vita Nuova XXV*:

"Let no poets speak without some interpretation in their own minds of what they say; for it would be deep shame to him who should rhyme under cover of metaphor or other rhetorical figure, and afterwards, being asked, should be unable to strip such vesture from his

words and show forth their real meaning. And my friend and I know many who rhyme thus foolishly."

His words are as true to-day as they were in the thirteenth century. Let them be remembered.

We have attempted a definition and have found some attributes at least that may reasonably be looked for in distinguishing the poetic mode of communication from others. They may be summarized as ordered music; an alchemical transmutation of the theme necessarily resulting from an emotional firing of the intellect, and passing frequently into that profundity with which is blended the sense of timelessness, the ancient seeming new, the new, old, and all fresh cast in gold; clarity, without which the builder does indeed labour in vain.

Every true poem will be found to possess some degree at least of the first and third attributes; the essential greatness of a poem, with which is involved its power to stand against Time, is measured by the degree in which it partakes of the second. Not an easy thing to measure; perhaps there is no general measuring-rod for this particular attribute of poetry but the passing of time. One feels it oneself in some poems, not in others; but one cannot make a criterion of oneself. Most people will feel it in work that has lived, and for that alone tradition is not to be despised.

It is not necessary, however, to go back so many years to find this most truly poetic quality developed to the greatest extent. Most accepted poets exhibit it on various occasions; and there are at least three poets of modern times who show it often in the highest degree of perfection. They are, in England, Gerard Hopkins; in Germany, Rainer Maria Rilke; in France, Arthur Rimbaud—the last perhaps most clearly of all.

Rimbaud would require several essays if one were to attempt to do justice to this, perhaps, the truest French poet after Villon. If is fortunately unnecessary to write them: the poet's life and work has been at last adequately treated in English in the admirable *Arthur Rimbaud* by Enid Starkie which has just appeared (Faber and Faber, 15s.). It is unnecessary here to do more than recommend those who

desire to gain a full insight into this remarkable poet's life and work to read this volume, as well as Rimbaud's poems. To demonstrate Rimbaud's remarkable powers as a poetic alchemist, it will perhaps be sufficient to quote one verse from the poem which is possibly his most representative and his finest, *Bateau Ivre* :—

" Et, dès lors, je me suis baigné dans le poème
De la mer infusé d'astres et lactescent,
Dévorant les azurs verts où, flottaison blême
Et ravie, un noyé pensif, parfois descend."

A verse that is justly famous, in which, in the crucible of poetic conception, as all through the poem, sea and sky are fused in one with the stress and sound of the poetry itself, making a fresh and challenging identity of familiar things, a new world out of ancient elements ; the capacity that distinguishes genius from talent, poetry ultimately from prose. No rules for accomplishing this can be devised ; we can but recognize it with gratitude when we see it. We can but protest when we see poetry acclaimed as true and great, wherein this fire does not burn; that poetry in which it is lacking,

"Così star suole in piede
Quale star può quel c'ha in error la sede."

T. WESTON RAMSEY.

THE CITIES

WE are beleaguered yet do not defend
What freedom still remains ; we have sunk deep.
The Cities hold us as large folds of sheep,
Starved out of will, unable to contend.
Strange gods must rule the world. Now shall we bend
Our knees to Mammon ? Shall we crouch and weep
Lest in his anger this pale monster leap
Upon our throats and that will be the end ?
O, fly the City, haste, else we are lost,
Stop not before we reach the wind-flanked hills,
That are God's ladder between Earth and Sky,
Out in the Country now made hoar with frost,
Till, free at last, we break our chains—our ills,
And such indignity to Man decry.

JOSEPH AQUILINA.

A DEFENCE OF "DON JUAN"

IT is a pity that Byron's greatest work should be perhaps his least read. *Don Juan* is long admittedly for these days of quick reading, but this should be no deterrent. A more serious obstacle lies in the charges that have been urged against it that it is of inferior workmanship and indelicate.

The question of indelicacy may be dismissed at once. *Don Juan* is never indelicate; at the most it is merely suggestive. When told that *Don Juan* was "the most licentious poem that had yet issued from the English press," Byron professed his inability to understand. "If they had told me that the poetry was bad," he said, "I would have acquiesced; but they say the contrary and then talk to me about morality." The fact is that the true poet is above morality and if Byron be proscribed on the score of want of decency, it would be necessary to sweep off one half of English Literature at once. As Goethe said in his preface to the translation of *Don Juan*—"Poets and Romancers, bad as they may be, have not yet learned to be more pernicious than the daily newspaper which is on every table." There is nothing in *Don Juan* to-day to offend the mind of the most delicately brought up individual, assuming that that same individual can bear to read the intimate details of floggings, murders and massacres that are featured every day in the morning press.

The charge of inferior workmanship and lack of care is more serious. Admittedly the poem is a hotch-potch. There is no co-ordinating principle and the action seems to be merely a series of adventures in which the hero remains the same while the heroine is constantly changing. The verse too is sometimes slapdash and uneven. There are pauses in which Byron takes an opportunity to revile his contemporaries and there are cantos that begin, "Hail Muse! et caetera."

But there is method in Byron's carelessness. It was not his intention to spend the force of his genius on something not worthy of it and he was careful to keep the brighter portions of the poem unrivalled in their majesty. He stated that the poem was written entirely for his own

pleasure. "It was all gin," he said. Nevertheless he was careful to write at his best when the action was at its greatest.

Thus one piece of fine writing follows on another throughout the sixteen cantos. But as every cheque cannot be for a million dollars, so a poem as long as *Don Juan* with as intricate a system of rhyming should not be reviled for the mediocrity of its "gaps." These gaps, considered as padding, are sufficiently competent. They should never be considered in any other way.

There is tremendous power in *Don Juan*. "What are your motives and object for painting nothing but scenes of vice and folly?" asked Moore, and Byron replied, "To remove the cloak which the manners and maxims of society throw over their secret sins, and to show them to the world as they really are." And this is why Byron so excels himself at the end of the work in his description of the corruption of the upper classes in the England of his time, Lord Henry's "burrowing for boroughs," the social banquet for voters who might come without a card, and how Juan's spilling of the fish and:

> "his not knowing how much oats
> Had fallen last market cost his host three votes."

Then there is the tittle-tattle after the banquet, the sallies of Kit-Kat the famous conversationalist, and the disrespect for morality resulting in the new commandment, "Thou Shalt not be—found out."

There is the same power in the description of the fall of Ismail. One moment Byron describes:

> "the glow
> Of burning streets, like moonlight on the water,"

the next he realizes beneath it the mad folly of a war waged by astute politicians while mankind die, where the officers "fall immortal in a bulletin," but the rank and file are denied even this. And describing the sea of slaughter he bursts out:

> "Cockneys of London! Muscadins of Paris!
> Just wonder what a pious pastime war is."

Other incidents are more quietly effective and coloured in softer tones. Such is the banquet on the island interrupted by the pirate Lambro, whose daughter Haidée has enraptured Juan with her "lovely female face of seventeen." There "the coloured garbs" are "as bright as butterflies," and the scene is one of fiddling, dancing girls, and an "unoriental roar of laughter" from where in a corner:

> "Afar, a dwarf buffoon stood telling tales
> To a sedate grey circle of old smokers."

After this we have the opera singers—the prima donna "haggard with dissipated vice," the musico "but a cracked old basin," and the scene in the Harem, the administrations of Dudu, Lola, and Katinka, and Dudu's dream of the golden apple.

And then there are the digressions from the text, witty, argumentative, philosophic, or absurd. Surely there is no one who can fail to be attracted by such a variety of subjects as love's inability to endure sea-sickness, the vanity of greatness, the middle age in man, Newton and the apple, and Rapp the harmonist, or with the comforting thought that "Men are but maggots of some huge Earth's burial."

Hazlitt in *The Spirit of the Age* condemned the poem on the ground that it was uneven, in other words that loveliness was mingled with humour, and beauty with satire. In his own words "after the lightning and the hurricane we are introduced to the interior of the cabin and the contents of wash hand basins." One might as well censure Shakespeare for his use of Tragi-Comedy. *Don Juan* was Byron's culmination in which he united his two great gifts of fine writing and satirical writing. On the one hand therefore we have the beauty of *The Isles of Greece*, or the lines to Love:

> "Oh Love! what is it in this world of our's
> Which makes it fatal to be loved. Ah why
> With cypress branches hast thou wreathed thy bowers
> And made thy best interpreter a sigh?"

And on the other we have such sharp sudden sallies as that describing the Sultan's palace:

> "Wealth had done wonders—taste not much,"

or the lines to the female intellectuals :

> " The Blues that tender tribe, who sigh o'er sonnets
> And with the pages of the last review
> Line the interior of their heads or bonnets,"

or on Suwarrow's preparations for the attack :

> " At which your wise men sneered in accents witty :
> He made no answer ; but he took the city."

It was the culmination of these two styles of writing in *Don Juan* that led Moore to praise the poem as containing " The cool shrewdness of age with the vivacity and glowing temperament of youth—the wit of a Voltaire with the sensibility of a Rousseau,—the minute practical knowledge of the man of society with the abstract and self-contemplative spirit of the poet."

The only explanation of this greatness in *Don Juan* must lie in the fact that it was perhaps Byron's most personal work. Nothing in it is artificial, he felt what he was writing, even in places where he was writing badly.

The point is that Byron had no children. One day the idea must have come to him of imagining a child and of making that child live for him in a poem. That was why Juan's father Don José was a caricature of himself and why his mother the Donna Inez had to be the unfortunate Anne Milbanke. And that is why when the Guiccioli said " she wished my lord would leave off writing that ugly Don Juan," he replied " I cannot give up my Don Juan. I do not know what I should do without my Don Juan." So Juan grew as Byron would have liked a son of his to grow, beautiful as a woman, brave in danger, resourceful in emergency and apt at conversation. And Juan lived the life that Byron, the swimmer of the Hellespont, would himself have preferred to live, a life of shipwrecks, battles, and good society, wine, women, and song. Juan was to be not merely a Miltonic Satan, but the whole hero and nothing but the hero, so proud :

> " that he could not stoop
> To any shoe unless it shod the Pope,"

and so tender that he pauses amidst the flaming ruins of

Ismail to rescue the child Leila. Byron had no intention of pointing a moral or of showing Juan in Hell. As he wrote to Medwin, "I will make him neither a dandy in town, nor a fox hunter in the country. He shall get into all sorts of scrapes and at length end his career in France. Poor Juan shall be guillotined in the French Revolution!" Had the poem been finished then, Juan's end was to have been as glorious as he had lived. Not for him the mud flats of Missolonghi!

Thus in *Don Juan* Byron was creating not a mock epic, nor a fantastically long poem to submit to posterity, but a hero for his own pleasure and satisfaction, a son to console him for his enforced exile from England, the disappointments of his career, and the bitterness that lay in his heart. Leigh Hunt alone came near the truth when he wrote that Byron's "hero in this work was a picture of the better half of his own nature."

And so while some scribbled to Byron saying that *Don Juan* had "disgusted every well regulated mind," and others like *The British Magazine* of the time quoted Feste at him from *Twelfth Night*, "Thy wits the heavens restore! Endeavour thyself to sleep and leave thy vain bibble-babble!", the review that is said to have interested Byron most was one written by an obscure person under the nom de plume of "John Bull." This man wrote "Stick to Don Juan; it is the only sincere thing you have ever done."

JOHN WALLER.

The Poetry Society (Incorporated) has accepted the Anglo-Hungarian Relations Committee's invitation to participate in "an English week in Budapest," the culmination of the Anglo-Hungarian Friendship Tour from July 31st to August 14th, 1938. The Poetry Society group will establish contact with the Hungarian poetry societies and other literary bodies, who offer special receptions, entertainments and hospitality. The General Itinerary includes 3 days in Prague, 3 days in Vienna, 8 days in Budapest and 2 days in Munich. The journey from Vienna to Budapest will be made down the Danube and there will be visits to Lake Balaton, to the Hungarian State Wine Cellars, Füred, the beautiful Hungarian Puszta and Salzburg. The aim of the Committee is to encourage cultural relations between England and Hungary and members will become acquainted with Hungarian life and people through personal contact. For a full syllabus of the Tour apply The General Secretary, The Poetry Society.

THREE EPITAPHS

HIGHER I soared
Than Saturn's blazing Rings,
Then, in a barbed-wire tangle,
Broke my wings.

II

I fought for words : there was so much to tell.
Alas ! my voice was diffident and weak.
The murmur of the sea in a sea-shell
Was all my language when I tried to speak.

III

Since greedy life has sucked me raisin-dry,
Where shall I find the energy to die ?

MARGARET SACKVILLE.

TEA ON THE LAWN

NOW that the sun has power,
Once more, to tan the skin and make wool hateful
And chill streams dear to touch ; now that, once more,
First heat-wave weather swings our wall-cut lives,
Like the toy, timepiece figures, inside-out :
Brings airy coolness in,
And chink of tea-cups to the glowing lawn ;
Now that the casual tea-time talk and laughter
Is backed for miles by birds' clear orchestra—
Flute notes and bells, deep ripples, drops jets and
High, linkt sweet sprinkling buttercups of sound—
Just as at last Spring's flowery end :
We think of you who young and laughing then
Lazed on the grass with us, and now do not,
And have so changed ; whose image now,
Summoned in thought, reproves and quiets us
Like deed of valour, like a man at prayer,
A soul in pain, one of the very poor.
Now you have gone too near
The vast, unresting dynamos that drive
Love, joy, creation, ever to be idle,
Ever to saunter without aim, like us
Who live in vanity under the sun. N. A. CRUICKSHANK.

HUNGARIAN POETRY

IN the centre of Eastern Europe, on the great fertile plain of the Magyar Alföld, surrounded by the Carpathian Mountains and the Alps, lies the Hungarian country. It is more than a thousand years since the Magyars, or Hungarians, wandered over from Asia, and settled down there to form a state after so many years of nomadic life.

Ever since the first holy king, Saint Stephen, in 1001, it has been the gateway of Eastern and Western civilization, defending western Europe from barbarian invasions and fighting here for its independency.

The Hungarians always like to express their emotions in poetry, and they contributed much art, music and literature to the world. The obstacle to international recognition of its poetry is the Magyar language itself, which descends from the Ural-Altay, related to the Finns and the Estonians. Despite the difficulty of grammar, the language is most expressive and musical, and very suitable for poetry.

The first sort of literature was chiefly concerned with introducing catholicism into the country, and Latin was the language used for education and all written documents. However, the Magyar folk itself found rich expression in folksongs which survived all through the years. One example of the still well-known ones is :

Not a mother bore thee
Sure a rose-tree wore thee !
One red Whitsun morning
Earth grew bright before thee.

The great epics of the West did not influence the country, though in the castles of the King and his knights, life was very vivid, with much singing, but they probably were not acquainted with writing.

During the Reformation, began an important era in literature. In this period lived " the Minnesinger " of Hungary, Valentine Balassa. His devotion to nature, religion and martial courage bore fruit in a rich and brilliant collection of poems, such as *Soldier Song* :

Soldiers ! What men could be
More blest on earth than we,
Here in the frontier command,

For in the pleasant Spring
Merrily songbirds sing
Gaily on every hand!
Sweet is the meadow rose,
Sweet dew the sky bestows;
What men know life like our band!

The counter-Reformation brought the use of Magyar as an instrument of religious disputation a stage nearer to perfection. Count Zrinyi, 1618–1664, a famous general; son of a House renowned for fighting successfully against the Turks, was mostly influenced by Virgil and Tasso. He completed the first big epic, in which he relates the victories of his ancestors over the Turks. The other famous man of the time was a scholar of the artificial rococo style, Stephen Gyöngyösi, 1625–1704.

After a period of decadency, when the use of Latin eclipsed every field of activity, a fresh movement began. This time it was influenced by several Western schools of poetry.

The first had its centre amongst the officers at the Royal Hungarian Guard, and followed the French masterpieces. The next one employed the classics of ancient Rome. The third influence entered from Germany. The great age of Goethe, Lessing, Schiller and Herder was reaching its height. There was, however, a national tendency to explore Hungarian traditions, which more and more absorbed the foreign influence. The leader of the German School was Francis Kazinczy, 1759–1831, "the first Hungarian man of letters." He was famous for his criticisms and his fight to reform the language and enrich it with idioms of his native land. His influence upon his contempories was incalculable, and prepared the way for romantic language. The rising enthusiasm for Hungarian independence carried the Hungarian poetry forward into the "Romantic Movement," and achieved power and beauty in national poetry. of which *My Lot* is an example:

Now at shore I've anchored, and reef'd my sails in;
Shouted taunting back at the angry tempest,
Past Charybdis, borne through a thousand perils
Wanly I wandered.

This is from Daniel Berzsenyi (1776–1836), the greatest writer of classical odes in Magyar, who belonged to this movement. Under this influence Charles Kisfaludy, 1788–1830, wrote his famous elegiac couplets in a poem, *Mohacs* :

Sighing I greet thee and mourn thee, thou meadow of burial, Mohacs—
Grave of our national life, redden'd with blood of the brave !
Over thee hover'd destruction, it hover'd on raven-dark pinions,
Wreaking its ravaging strength, wrathfully, madly on thee.

The first link in chain of the National poetry movement is Count Joseph Gvadanyi (1725–1801) ; *A Country Notary's Journey to Buda* ; a long narrative poem protesting against Germanizing tendencies. The next link is Michael Csokonai, (1773–1805), a true lyrist. The climax is reached between 1820–1867. The national element becomes the basis of poetry and the language was well prepared by the labours of preceding generations. The greatest poets, Michael Vörösmarty, Alexander Petöfi, and John Arany, dominate the period. Magnificent epics are written in classical hexameters, boast of the Magyar past and inspired by the Magyar present, indignant about Hamburg oppression, as *A Summons*, 1936 :

O Magyar, keep immovably
Thy native country's trust,
For it has borne thee, and at death
Will consecrate thy dust !
No other spot in all the world
Can touch thy heart as home ;
Let fortune bless or fortune curse,
From hence thou shalt not roam.

One of Vörösmarty's lyrical poems is *The Old Gypsy* :

Gypsy, strike up ! You've gulp'd your wine for pay.
Step lively now, and let your tunes be fine !
What's life on humble fare ? Have done with gloom !
Fill up the empty glass with ruddy wine !
This earthly life is evermore the same,
With alternating frost and dancing flame.
Strike up ! Who knows how soon the day will come
When fiddle-bow is bent and music dumb ?
Grief's in your heart, but wine is in your glass :
Play, gypsy, play, and let your trouble pass !

He also translated Shakespeare; *Julius Caesar*, and *King Lear*.

The greatest lyric poet of the country was Alexander Petöfi. He endured much hardship before he perished at the age of twenty-six in the war of independence. His intense love of nature, woman, peasant life and native land puts him nearer to Burns than anyone else in Europe. He translated *Coriolanus*. His national song, recited by himself in 1848, put into fire the whole Hungarian youth, and is of historical importance in the fights for Hungarian independence :

Magyars, rise, your country calls you !
Meet this hour, whate'er befalls you !
Shall we freemen be, or slaves ?
Chose the lot your spirit craves !—
By Hungary's holy God
Do we swear,
Do we swear, that servile chains
We'll no more bear !

He loved the big Hungarian plain and the people there, and several of his lyrical poems relate its beauty to us.

John Arany, the third member of the great romantic triad, became Hungary's greatest master of epic and ballad. He combined artistry with greater modernity and deeper psychological insight. His masterpiece of epic poetry is *Death of Buda*, and the trilogy *Toldi*, who was a Hungarian folks hero. Arany was very interested in English literature and translated Shakespeare. His ballad, the *Bards of Wales*, he obtained from English history, and is an allegory of Habsburg tyranny :

Edward the king, the English king,
Bestrides his tawny steed,
" For I will see if Wales," said he,
" Accepts my rule indeed."

One of his famous philosophical poems is *To My Son* :

Thanks be to God, the night has come again
To end one day, one portion of life's pain !
A little candle lights our lonely room,
Surrounded by the ambush of the gloom.
Why are you still awake, my little son ?
Behold, your bed is soft, and spent the day.
Then come, my sweet wee lad, let play be done ;
And kneeling, fold your little hands, and pray.

The famous literary group called the "Aurora Circle" included many great poets, such as the before-mentioned Kisfaludy and Francis Kölcsey, author of the Hungarian National Anthem.

After the unsuccessful war for political independence in 1848–1849, the iron regime imposed from Vienna brought a depressing period. The poets who reveal the grief and despair of these dark days, in disguise of allegorical poems, are Michael Tompa and Emery Madách.

The best known poem of Tompa's is *To the Stork*:

> The air grows warmer o'er the brightening plain,
> And thou, good friend the Stork, art here again!
> The breaches in thy nest thou makest good
> That there thou mayest hatch thy downy brood.
> Turn back, turn back! Or thou by treacherous sun
> And soft, insidious brook, shalt be undone:
> Turn back, turn back! The Springtime is not come,
> And all our life is shuddering or numb.

Madách is the greatest philosophical poet of Hungary, and his great drama, *The Tragedy of Man*, resembles Goethe's *Faust*. Though of less poetic value, it deals with the purpose and meaning of human life. He wrote it in the dark cell of a political prison and his gloom is explicable on the grounds of the national tragedy of his age.

Under the friendly compromise which was brought in 1867 to Hungary by the Austrians, Hungary prospered exceedingly until 1914. The poetry, however, in the last four decades of the nineteenth century, was not notable. It may be that the bayonet and scaffold of 1848–1867 weeded out the potential geniuses of the next generation. There was, however, a wholesome consolidation of past achievements and important academic re-statements of literary values, undertaken with further translations of Shakespeare and Tennyson, Molière, Hugo, Goethe, Heine, Byron and Dante.

In the twentieth century the issue between the poetic conservatives and radicals has become clear and decisive. The most eminent representative of the older school is Andrew Kozma, following John Arany in his style, and the lyric tradition of Petöfi, represented best by Michael

Szabolcska. The founder of the group of Radicals was Andrew Ady, the chief lyrical poet of modern Hungary, and the starkest radical of them all. He published over 1,000 poems in twenty years, almost invariably brief lyrics, cunningly stained with the tincture of a mood or stamped with the impress of a thought. He seeks in Hungarian for new phrases as yet unspoilt by generations of versifiers and others taken from the medieval past. *I Yearn for Other's Love* is an example,

None lives whom I begot, from whom descend
I claim no relative, I clasp no friend :
An utter orphan I,
An utter orphan I !
I am like every man, a mystery,
A lonely headland by an Arctic sea,
A wisp of wandering fire,
A wisp of wandering fire !

Another great radical was Michael Babits ; a virtuoso of technique. Still another group of poets chiefly modernistic in sympathy, have been evident since the war in those parts of historical Hungary which have passed under the rule of neighbouring nations. One of the grieving voices from Transylvania is Louis Aprily, with his *Nostalgia* :

My troubled heart here strangely beats
Mid blare of noise and blaze of light.
To seek my cave of calm again
I greatly yearn to take my flight.

The passionate grief and despair of three million Hungarians in these lost territories have found poignant expression in recent poetry.

Budapest is the centre of the present literary life, where many geniuses and young poets are inspired by the Magyar Muse, and many thrilling evenings are spent in their societies, but personal experience will give you so much more insight than mere printed word. Their doors are open to give the friendliest welcome to their brothers from abroad.

GEORGIE BOGYO.

Translation of poems taken from *The Magyar Muse* by Watson Kirkconnel, M.A., Copyright, 1933 U.K., printed by the Canadian Hungarian News Co., Ltd., 375 Hargrave Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

DAWN ON THE HELLESPONT

AT Sestos the sun rose,
Raking the sea with gilded hoes,
Imposing spells
On seaweed bells
And on the opal sides of oyster shells,
It took for plunder
All Hellespont with oars of flashing wonder—
Capricious waves,
Rocks and the slippery caves,
The red cliff loam,
Green moss and ivory foam,
And slid down Hero's hair, and seeking more,
Lighted Leander on the further shore.

The morning grew and soon
Evolved florescence of full noon,
And Hero, proud
As a white cloud
Before the shrine of Aphrodite bowed :
A Temple maiden
With bounteous censorful of incense laden,
Wrist-neat and fain
To hand the swinging chain,
Surprised the glance
Of a daydream or trance,
And found in her a would-be-veiled delight,
Chastened by day and cherished in the night.

Storm canopied the sea
And hung it with its tapestry,
The wind shrilled high
Through the night sky
And foam dry-massed incontinent swept by ;
But all enduring
Ever Leander swam to his love's luring,
Till Hero's light
Faltered upon the night
And dying gave
Leander to the grave—

And at the sad homecoming of the morning
The priestess lay the purple seas adorning. . .

A sunray struck the gloom
And glanced upon Achilles' tomb,
Where violets spent
Measureless scent
To mark the battle-gloried monument:
But Hero's wonder
Would no more vent itself in a flower's plunder,
Leander's foot
Would violate no root:
He lies at ease
Alone in the calm seas,
And Aphrodite all impassive waits
Worshipperless behind her silvery gates.

I. SUTHERLAND GROOM.

APRIL WIND

IN the upland meadows as I go
Among the dew-sheathed grasses,
The shrill wind passes
Dawn cooled fingers through my tangled hair.

Once, long ago, a wind went by in Tyre
Seeking the cobalt waves
By high vermilion staves
Where galleys clustered,
But sullen cedars caught it.

In Egypt took where Charmian lay
And saw all dimly in the golden day
The adder creeping, a little wind went by
And fluttered with her breath, and fluttering, died.

But here the wind rides free
Through honey sunlight, paler still
Than moon-pale mullein or daffodil.

MARJORIE MASON.

RAGS OF TIME

"Hours, days, months which are the rags of time."
DONNE.

IF rags, I'll harvest them and boil
The contaminating soil
From their fibres and attain
The naked residue again.

I shall shake and mat the stuff
Into paper smooth and tough
That will take an aquatint:
"Beauty from a lazar-squint."

I shall dig the rags of time
From the misbegotten slime,
Nor ever beg them in the street,—
There are too many at my feet.
TERENCE HEYWOOD.

CAPTIVITY

WE had need of a wall.
For the vast spaces,
Unbroken, unending,
Stretching to cruel infinity,
We were too small.
We had need of a wall.

We craved for noise.
Of silence,
Depth on depth,
Poignant, critical,
We were afraid.
We craved for noise.

We have built our wall,
Higher and higher and higher
We have built our wall.
We have made our noise,
Louder and louder and louder,
We have made our noise.

And now
We cannot see over our wall
And noise is driving us mad.
We cry for space, for silence.
Vainly we fling ourselves
Against unyielding walls,
And strive to drown
Clamour with clamour.
In vain, in vain, we
Captors in captivity. HILDA M. SLADE.

LOVE AMONG THE ROSES

I

HERE where the dusk reposes
Dim and divine,
Your soul—on balm of roses—
Is borne to mine:

Its loveliness pervades me
Around, above,
Pursues and yet evades me
And breathes of love.

II

Honey-Bee with his fairy thunder
Cleaves the ether and comes to rest,
Folded within the splendid wonder
The pure delight of a petalled breast.

So my heart with its inward singing
Must through azure enchantment dart,
Brings to an end its aimless winging,
And rests quiescent upon your heart.

III

Where roses gleamed
In waves of gold,
She turned and wept
Like nymph of old:

So beautiful
In poise and line
She seemed half mortal
Half divine.

Her bright tears bathed
The rose's face,
Could they find lovelier
Resting place?

IV

So fare you well, my lovely Dear,
And fare you well, my Sweet,
The petals of the rose may flush
And fall before we meet.

The golden petals of the rose
Shall scatter far and wide,
I could have spared the rose, my Sweet,
Had you been by my side.

But fare you well, my lovely Dear,
And fare you well, my Sweet,
The petals of the rose may flush
And fall before we meet.

V

When on my life there steals the autumn sleep
When joy, like ruined leaves, lies buried deep,

When woods are songless, and the afterglow
Is wan with presage of the winter snow,

I should have turned to you for sunlit gold,
Sensed in your soul the April buds unfold

And there have found (where deathless summer glows)
Green of the leaf, and glory of the rose!

ELEANOUR NORTON.

UPON THE SMALL CHALDEE COLUMN

UPON the small Chaldee column
found among the ruins of the Temple of Adonai
(a small Chaldee Column so strange to our art,
so gravely cut upon the reddish granite)
there was descried, with much difficulty,
on the part of the Museum people
carrying at the time the excavation,
the word: Remember! . . .
They all continued carrying on the work,
indifferent, cool,
in the usual professional way,
with the exception of a young man—
a new Greek scientist in antiquities—
who stood pale before the Column
and forgot himself in his thoughts . . . .
He fixed his suffering look
upon the half intelligible letters—
Remember . . .
and stood motionless, still,
before the small Chaldee Column
which was found among the ruins of the Temple of Adonai,
the small Chaldee Column so strange to our art,
so gravely cut upon the reddish granite . . .

Paphos, 1937 Chr. ARISTOTELIS GALATOPOULOS.

MISTS

DESPONDENT wraiths that twist so tirelessly
In silvered shadow through the grey half-light,
Exilèd pilgrims bowing noiselessly,
Who pass in eerily contorted flight.

Wan ghosts, that once in bitter hunger craved
Some optimistic hope, futurity,
But only found reality enslaved,
So sought escape in dim obscurity.

Myself a tired ghost, on earth I move,
Scarce knowing what to hate, or what to love.

D. R. W. CARR.

THE CELLAR

THE mind has a secret cellar,
Where Daydream and Desire
And Hope, the story-teller,
And Doubt, the witch, conspire,
And, like a bat, Delusion flits,
And Memory, the spider, sits.

Blind as a well the basement,
And cobweb-dim the air,
And none can loose the casement
And none descend the stair;
Many's the time that I have sat
With a Witch, a Spider and a Bat.

RONALD FULLER

SOMEONE IN A STREET

SHE won't be going back any more
To the little house where she lived before
In the country—the house with the ever open door;
And she doesn't seem to mind a bit—
Lord! It makes my heart ache to think of it,
The sloping garden with its one pig sty,
The green trees and the wide blue sky,
The cheerful clamour of hens all day,
The lark's reed-like song far away
On the marshes, and the lambs' bleat
And the good green turf beneath your feet
And in spring the cuckoo's call.
I don't know how she could go and leave it all
And live in a mean street.

She doesn't seem to miss the country,
She says she found her cottage lonely.
Lonely! Her door faced the setting sun
And when her long day's work was done
She could watch it going down and, by and by,
Count the first faint stars in the dim sky.
She could see from where she stood
The rising moon above the wood;

Or on other nights again
The little winds and the soft spring rain
Would come about her door to play,
And the lambs call her from over the way.
How could she ever be lonely
With such sweet things for company?
How could she ever go away?
Her street's a hell on a hot day—
But she isn't going back any more
To the house with the ever open door.

PHYLLIS HOWELL.

SPRING DIMENSION

THIS day is crystal clear. Horizons seem
But a bright bubble broken in our hand:
Beneath the wind-blown tents of mandrakes creep
Umbrageous secrets from some nether land
Half cognizant, half dream,
While the waxen bells of the mandrakes
Ring faintly in their sleep.

As distance shatters, so small things grow vast:
See how this convoluted fern decides
To unfurl its lacy fans, and everywhere
Abides that sense of deep emprise that hides
Within a hooded past.
Of beauty's swift mutation
Now be aware! WINIFRED ADAMS BURR.

At the annual conference of the Council of the Burns Federation held in Newcastle, where Burns spent the night of May 29th, 1887, during his Border tour, Mr. Ninian Macwhannell, F.R.I.B.A. (president), of Glasgow, pointed out that in 1802—only six years after the death of the poet—Newcastle issued an edition of Burns, and in all no fewer than sixteen editions had been issued there—a record far in excess of any other town in England except London. Newcastle had also issued many pamphlets, and in addition had collected a large sum of money with which it was proposed to erect a Burns memorial, but which, on second and wiser thoughts, had been devoted to the infirmary and local charities.

THE MINSTREL BOY

FROM the fourteenth century to the time when Thomas Moore first began to write poetry was nearly half a millennium. The old traditional Irish lyric poems covered a period of seven hundred years, that is between the Heroic Cycle of the Fianna and that later century, when the music of those ancient songs had ceased to be heard. Poetry still continued to be written, but it has been said that Irish minstrelsy was from that time a blank in the history of Europe. There were war-songs to martial music written by the bards of the various clans which fought against English rule, and one of their bard-chieftains was beheaded during the reign of Elizabeth. It has been estimated that more than two hundred poets had existed from the time of Amergin, the bard of the Milesians, to the beginning of the nineteenth century, and many of their poems are still extant.

Thomas Moore has given us in many of his poems incidents in Ireland's history from the landing of those semi-mythical invaders to his own time.

Many of those lyrical gems of the Gael continued to be sung or intoned by " travelling men " in spite of existing laws in order to suppress them, as they excited hopes of national independence, and they like the poet Raftery journeyed on foot throughout the countryside, visiting market-places and fairs where people gathered to listen to those metrical tales having for their subject Ireland's lost heritage. It is said that the persecution of the bards during Elizabethan and Cromwellian times led to that dreary allegory in which the national hopes were shrouded; such as Mangan's *Dark Rosaleen*, Aubrey de Vere's *Little Black Rose*, etc., also the *Niobe of Nations*.

In the early eighteenth century Irish poetry gained a fresh impetus due to the Jacobite movement, and the new poets were true descendants of the Irish bards.[1] They had no position to boast of, no protection, but they were

[1] According to Hugh de Blacam in *The Nineteenth Century* for April, 1938, poets of distinction were amongst the Jacobites when rich-rhymed Gaelic verse was passionately Jacobite, that is Tory in the old sense ; and he adds " hunted tories were baited with hounds over the hills and moors. Tory is derived from a Gaelic word ' toir ' meaning ' the hunt,' and included the warning cry of ' the hunt is coming '."

enabled to adopt the style of the English and Scottish Jacobite poets of that period in order to express the sufferings of their country, and in that way they formed a connection with the fallen Stuart dynasty. Then followed the street-ballad, but of a higher order than what is called by that name to-day.

Thomas Moore was born in 1779, and as L. A. G. Strong states in *The Minstrel Boy, A Portrait of Tom Moore* (Hodder and Stoughton), he was the first Irishman of letters to be identified with his country in the looking back to a golden age, and it was he no doubt who put Ireland back on the cultural map of Europe.

Another poet, born in 1788—only nine years after Moore —was Sir Aubrey de Vere Hunt, Bart.,[1] who in 1823 published a volume of poems, *The Duke of Mercia*, and he was also a man of letters. One of his poems is named *The Lamentation of Ireland*, into which he introduced as a symbolic figure the solitary remnant of the inspiring bards, " the last sad branch of Erin's minstrelsy." In this poem are mentioned the names of the dead chieftains :

> In chivalrous array, a glittering train,
> As erst 'neath Cashel's rock, in Tara's hall,
> On sculptural throne, or barbed steed.

The first of the Irish Melodies by Moore appeared in 1808, and the best were written in 1815. The last were published in 1834. Both poets must have looked back upon the same golden age simultaneously.

Another contemporary poet was James Clarence Mangan, who, despite the drudgery in his early youth from morning until late at night in an attorney's office, and who sought a false heaven in drink and opium, wrote some of the most beautiful Irish poems ever penned in the English language. His *Dark Rosaleen* already mentioned, is considered by many to be superior to anything that Moore has written. Moore achieved more than did his two contemporaries for Irish poetry, and that was to have raised it above the

[1]In 1832 he assumed by royal licence the ancestral name de Vere. He was a friend of Wordsworth, and his sons, Sir Stephen de Vere and Aubrey de Vere, were poets. The latter was a friend of Tennyson, whose poem," Lady Clara Vere de Vere," was suggested by the name.

street ballad, to which degree it had fallen. And yet at the same time one must remember that the street ballad was the only means by which poetry could have reached the popular mind, for the majority of the people in those far-off days were not only poor but illiterate, but they were able to learn by heart those ballads which in later times became traditional, and were an important factor in the nation's history and development. Nevertheless, it required poets of culture as well as genius such as Thomas Moore for Irish poetry to gain appreciation in the outer world, and who, owing to the success of *The Irish Melodies*, brought home for the first time to the minds of other nations the sorrows, struggles and hopes of the Irish race throughout the long past centuries.

There is no doubt that Moore's fame was established by the publication of the *Melodies*. Their success was not entirely due to the lyrics themselves, although they are in many instances full of colour and have a rich sweetness which is akin to music, and yet he considered that what his skill as a musician served him in his choice of exquisite rhythms as well as mournful sounds, the wedding of music with poetry from his point of view was not only natural, but essential; and as the music for the most part consisted of traditional airs whose exceptional sweetness appealed to the ear, the result was perfect harmony. As he had a sweet melodious voice, his singing of those songs added considerably to his fame in London drawing-rooms.

H. W. Nevinson has drawn attention to the difference in the conception of Irish minstrelsy held by Moore and the theme of old Irish legend conceived by W. B. Yeats and other latter day poets and translations from the Gaelic, by saying that " we rise from a drawing-room ballad under early Victorian chandeliers to a spirit's song among the dishevelled morning stars."

Mr. Strong mentions how eleven of the old Irish melodies for which Moore wrote such beautiful words and included in his first collection, were from a number of ancient traditional airs sung in Belfast in 1792 by a gathering of the last of the Irish harpers. I have seen it mentioned else-

where that six of these harpers were very old, and all were either blind or lame.[1]

What the poet Moore did for his country is expressed in these lines :

> Dear Harp of my Country ! in darkness I found thee
> The cold chain of silence had hung o'er there long,
> When, proudly, my own Island Harp, I unbound thee,
> And gave all thy chords to light, freedom and song ! "

The harp, perhaps the most melodious of all musical instruments, was the symbol of Ireland's past minstrelsy, that golden age of bardic song. He brought the harp into several of his lyrics—*The Origin of the Harp*, *The Harp that once*, etc., *Dear Harp of my Country*, *The Minstrel Boy*, *My Gentle Harp*—in fact I might say facetiously that he harped upon the harp more than any other poet.

What a strange contrast was Moore to Mangan, his contemporary, although twenty-four years his junior, and who died three years earlier. Moore did not remain in Ireland. He had had a good classical education, and the *entrée* into the best social circles in the London of that day. He was presented to George Prince of Wales who accepted the dedication of the translation of the *Odes of Anacreon*, which, as a present day writer states, are not sufficiently Hellenic to pass modern criticism. One is inclined to wonder how many of the 79 odes the Prince had actually read. No doubt the translations gave him a certain amount of innocent enjoyment as the Greek poet embodied in his odes the triple worship of the Muses, wine, and love, as Moore had done but in a smaller degree, for, to quote a critic, " his lyrics have that tedious sameness being the eternal love of one's country, the wine of other countries and the woman of all countries."

The poems that Moore wrote under the pseudonym of Tom Little were a success, but unfortunately he made over

[1] I was informed many years ago by a then elderly relative of the method by which Moore's Irish melodies were arranged for piano-forte setting, and being prepared for publication, and on account of public demand haste was imperative.

The two musicians when the task neared completion worked hard day and night, and they both consumed twenty tumblers of punch on each nocturnal occasion, and owing to such " heavenly " inspiration the publication was a complete success, as numbers of copies of the collections were sold.

to his publisher their copyright in discharge of a debt of sixty pounds, and for several years the publisher made two hundred a year out of the transaction. Mr. Strong remarks that those poems were mildly *risqué*, and yet I cannot imagine Moore, who was to my mind the pink of propriety, as ever having written anything *risqué*; but he had evidently shocked some people, for in a mid-Victorian anthology of poetry it is stated that "these verses, which as translations of Catullus display ability, but are otherwise objectionable."[1]

Moore was no doubt enraptured by the exquisite phrasing of the Lesbian Odes, and took a delight in changing from a dead to a living language the loveliest of classical poems. That wonderful cycle of songs where rapture, joy, betrayal and ultimate despair are displayed, were inspired by the passionate love of the poet for his mistress, for whom he chose the name Lesbia after the Lesbian poetess Sappho, on account of the analogy he had fancied existed between the twain, and those love songs reached such a high perfection of beauty as to make the Horatian odes seem dull by comparison. George Saintsbury remarked that in later editions "Thomas Little" had been so much subjected to the fig-leaf and knife, readers have wondered why so much objection was taken to him.

After the publication of *The Irish Melodies*, the real Thomas Moore at last came into his own like a glowing comet amidst a golden galaxy of stars, for the period was an age of poetry, and poetry was not only popular but fashionable. It was read, recited, spoken about, and frequently quoted. The so-called romantists had followed the Augustans, and scarcely ever were there so many poets living simultaneously. There was Scott, a luminary of the first magnitude before his poetic light had waned and gave place to Byron, a new burning constellation in the ascendant, and whose name was already upon people's lips, Wordsworth and Coleridge were already giant suns; both Shelley and

[1] Another critic wrote at a later date that the poems by "Tom Little" were very immoral and indelicate, and Moore felt ashamed of them in after years. What Moore wrote about himself is amusing "Mr. Little gave much of his time to the study of amatory writers, Ovid made him like a rake and Propertius like a schoolmaster."

Keats, as planets who swam into human ken, were likewise destined to become immortal. There were the lesser lights, Campbell, Southey, Leigh Hunt, Macaulay, Crabbe, Landon, Rogers, Hood, Lamb, Wolfe, Keble and others, with many satellites in that heavenly constellation filled with the spirit of poetry; and Moore amidst the full harmonious hierarchy will ever remain a twinkling star. He had met nearly all of his contemporaries, and made a friend of each. At Abbotsford Scott exclaimed "Now my dear Moore, we are friends for life." Wordsworth expressed pleasure in his company, but Moore found him "rather dull." Coleridge he only imperfectly appreciated; Lamb he found full of villainous and abortive puns; Leigh Hunt compared his voice to a flute, and sang his praises, but Moore considered Crabbe "as dry as a land-crab that ever crawled." He met Campbell and admired some of his minor poetry, sea-odes, etc., He thought Shelley's poetry puzzling and beyond him, excepting some of the minor gems, yet it is interesting to note that Shelley referred to Moore in *Adonais* in these lines:

> . . . from her wilds Ierne sent
> The sweetest lyrist of her saddest wrongs.

The Irish Poet, however, doubted the compliment of being hailed as the melodist of Erin, also Shelley's sincerity in his reference to Ireland's wrongs.

His most lasting friendships with his brother poets were those he had formed with Samuel Rogers and Byron,[1] the latter friendship, was made after the bloodless and "half-leadless duel" he had had with Jeffrey of the *Edinburgh Review*. Byron's jibe in *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, regarding the incident resulted in a challenge to fight him in turn from Moore, an encounter which never took place. All these particulars are very graphically told in *The Minstrel Boy*. This book is quite as interesting as any novel, and L. A. G. Strong has utilized his skill as a novelist

[1] Byron dedicated *The Corsair* to Moore, and wrote his famous prose eulogy in addition to his poem commencing with "My boat is on the shore." John Wilson, of *Blackwood's Magazine*, better known perhaps as Christopher North, ranked Moore, strangely enough, above Burns; but Wilson himself was not a poet.

to the best advantage. This I consider to be a great achievement in view of the fact that Moore belonged to a period which to many of the present generation is far remote. No doubt his reputation as a poet nowadays is to a great extent due to selections from his *Irish Melodies* and other lyrics included in the latest anthologies of poetry; at the same time his poetical works are still on sale, or can be had at any public library, and I know for a fact that his poetry is not altogether neglected in England.

Melody in versification has not, as some appear to imagine, gone out of fashion, or out of date. I doubt if good poetry could ever be fashionable, if that means it is specially made for people who are intellectually deficient and guided by the herd instinct, like those people who pride themselves upon being able to appreciate those modernist metrical abortions that pass for poetry yet blaspheme the sacred name by being placed under that heading, and the sooner they go out of fashion the better for the sake of beauty and culture which the poets [*sic*] endeavour to repress. Granted that different types of poetry have had their vogue from time to time, there is no doubt that the greatest and best poems will never be forgotten, and they include many written by Thomas Moore who was so highly praised by the intelligentsia of his day.

The Minstrel Boy was a brave undertaking when we consider that to the general public Moore at the present day is little more than a name, and the author has carried out his task very successfully by depicting in a vivid manner the youth of a budding poet amid humble surroundings, his college days and meeting with Robert Emmet, and the subsequent tragedy which befell the young patriot that inspired Moore to write two of his most beautiful and pathetic poems. Also his life in London, wedded happiness, then ultimate success as a poet together with the offer of three thousand guineas by Longmans, the publisher, for a poem before he had read a line. So much for the bubble reputation in a poetic age. *The Loves of the Angels* brought him £1000 during the first few months.

H. T. HUNT GRUBB.

NO OTHER LIPS

NO other lips but yours shall touch my lips
For now at last my soul's vow beats
In unison with all my heart's desires.
It was for this my white virginity
Content with ecstasy of field and hill
Waited in true serenity of youth.
Hand shall touch hand, lip shall touch hand and cheek
In friendship's concord and sweet comfortings
But you alone with those dear shapes I know
Shall make immortal impress on my mouth
And mortal make my child.

Have I not seen the slanting mountainsides
From icy summit to the tawny glades
Reflected in a rainy London street?
In one white snowdrop in a window box
Blinding incredible snow?
One swallow an entire summer?
So in one pair of lips Promethean fire and Holy Ghost
All images reflected in two eyes
And all the gifts of life in your two hands?

M. E. MITCHELL.

AFTER THE CONCERT

GOD save the King! Across the snow,
With footsteps light and cheeks aglow,
She walked home and her heart was singing,
Her mind sonorous still and ringing
With all the music she had heard;
And came into an overheated
Room, where her two aunts were seated
Close to the fire. They had not stirred
While she was gone or said a word,
But basked and dozed and blinked like old
Decrepit cats who fear the cold.
"Do shut the door! There is a draught!" they said.
The wireless drivelled on, the gas-light purred,
And by the time that she went up to bed,
The music in her heart and in her head
Was mute like a caged bird.

E. F. A. GEACH.

THE POETRY OF WILLIAM SOUTAR

FROM the cracks and crevices of national degeneration, after years of gradual economic and social collapse and then laborious reconstruction, there invariably appears the flora of a new dynamic spirit. At first this element in national consciousness, or feeling for fresh spiritual values as opposed to material engrossment, is not apparent; the *anima* in man, distorted, pettified, irresponsive and careless in a mechanistically girdled era, is unable to recognize the voice calling it to new spheres of living and thinking. Whoever has seen deeply into the twentieth century has doubtless divined that the flighty and artificial approach to modern problems is based on a blind effort at self-preservation. Here and there one finds an attempt to merge these artificialities into " purer forms "—much of modern poetry is that—a brave effort to sublimate existing hardships; a struggle between good and evil, all of which in the great artist—the man who has drained his mind of all artifice, who fights to detach himself from the bounded, folk-diseased circle—creates in a moment the seed from which a great art or culture may spring.

Every man of destiny (and it is no accident that Goethe was born in Germany or Shakespeare in England) strives to give what is shallow in his Age purpose—economically, sociologically, intellectually; and, although the efforts seem puerile, as, for example, in Nietzsche and Herbert Palmer, he stealthily awakens dormant minds to the depths and heights and possibilities of his design. And so we have the gathering together of diverse armies: for every one great artist, it is true, there are superfluities, " but so long as a great art endures or a great culture exists they achieve a slight worthiness."

And the poet? It has been said that he is a *free spirit*, that in seeking to liberate his less imaginative contemporaries from the automatous tempo of blind, downward living and thinking, he exists in a world of strange ideals, swayed only by the brave and ecstatic nuances of his thought. What nonsense. Very few poets, especially reformers like

Shelley, can afford to live outside the ambit of human activity. The Faustian soul is not just philosophic excursion; The Dantean *Commedia* reflects not only the frenzy of mind or the agony of spiritual yearning, but the strength, the beauty, the vision, as Croce points out, of the Florentine and all the joys, sorrows, purities and vices of *anima italiana*.

Despite the present-day orgy of will-to-power, the growth of the lamb into a raiding lion and the disruptive political elements in world-history, the meaning and value of Culture are becoming more and more obvious. Man's technical development is artificial because it depends for sustenance upon alarms conducive to war, and war, after all, cannot become a permanency because it is a life-emotion which destroys itself in the end as all counterfeit emotions do. So far Technics have overshadowed the cultural side of civilization, but Culture—the welding together of human ideas, the stabilizing of society and the permeating of that structure, with all varieties of aesthetics (not just the appreciation of the beautiful in art and literature) is permanent in our nature and must naturally recur again and again despite the teaching of Technics that man is a beast of prey and can only exist by plunder. Technics build to destroy, but the aesthetic in man as an eternal life-form must triumph over Technics which is merely an intellectual weapon of the politician.

And so we come to the difficult problem: What is the meaning and the function of the poet? When Hugh MacDiarmid published his Penny Wheep and Sangschaw lyrics, the majority of Scots regarded them not as the flora of a new regenerating spirit but as the efflorescence of a dreamer whose place was not in the twentieth century but in some nebulous country of the mind. Opposition leaped at the throat of this prelude to new thinking and expression, but despite the hostility, despite the ridiculous view that Scottish poetry died with Burns, the tempo had been set, and the dynamic rhythm was received by others, many of them, no doubt, superfluities—except William Soutar. It wasn't imitation in Soutar's case: it was the natural reaction of a

fine spiritual nature to a great recurring element in national history : not pupil and master, but *Duine Sidhe*.[1]

Soutar's vision is mystical : MacDiarmid's traverses all intellectual plains. And this mysticism of William Soutar, this desire to elevate, energize, ay, beatify existence is sometimes difficult of full comprehension, because Soutar is fundamentally epigrammatic, and the " dreams that wave before the half-shut eye " sometimes lose their force under the thunder of that hammer.

But it would be wrong to assume that Soutar's poetry is only faintly limned with mysticism, that his work is merely the socket for MacDiarmid's candle : that is not so. Everything of the highest value is, in approach, original, and although there are echoes of his great contemporary and dialectical gleanings and turns of phrase in the Scots poems reminiscent of the Makars the result is not imitative. The source of the waters is within himself, the impetus, it may be, comes from MacDiarmid, and the effect, although void of the full-bosomed, sun-lit flow of such poems as *On Watching the Esk Again* and *Lament for the Great Music*, is the strange embroidery of an enchanted being. And yet this enchantment is not that of an easy mind—a mind which can accept with equanimity the multitudinous vagaries of the world :

> Out of the darkness winging ;
> Out of the night
> We come from ageless silence
> In silent flight :
> Out of the darkness bringing
> A sense of ageless mysteries :
> The endless revolution—nights and days
> Through the vast Planets flinging ;
> Seasons and tides ; the maze
> Of life thrust down earth's broad highways
> From dust to dust,
> Out of the darkness swinging ;
> Out of the night
> We come, from ageless silence, winging
> Into the deeper darknesses of light.

Where Soutar is lost in the throes of spiritual research,

[1] *Gods of the Earth.*

meditating upon "dust to dust"—the keynote in all his poetry—bravely trying to formulate a redeeming philosophy for the broken heart, MacDiarmid strides over the problems of the ego, careless of the effect but knowing that in the end the ultimate reality will be evident. This does not mean, however, that Soutar lacks the great music or does not have the mature organic gleam of a complete mind. Far from it: if anything he is more complete than MacDiarmid because his vision is confined to one solid aspect of life, and that aspect patterns all that he writes. It is spring, summer and winter; it is birth, vibrant living and then death; it is Rilke come to us in these strongly concise poems which touch the pulse of thought and flame out, burning through the crusts of pessimism, to smoulder there in the hope that death is but life again. Ay:

I have known passion; and have known
This passion into silence grown,
With recollection, heavy as a stone.

I have known passion as a flame
Foulder into a death; a name
That woke in dreams nor sanctity nor shame.

Still gleam the years with torches, thrust
About my bastioned soul; and lust
Fumbles behind the doors to mock my trust.

O! fool, 'tis death that walks around
More sure than with a trumpet sound—
And all my towers are crumbling to the ground.

and in his book, *The Solitary Way*:

The hour is late in my darkened room
Where the firelight frays across the floor:
Someone has shut the gate.
I listen, but can hear no step from the gloom;
I listen: there is someone at the door.
Rigid I sit and dare not turn:
The door is open, I feel the wind;
But rigid I sit afraid to learn
Who standeth there at the back of my mind.
Cold the wind blows, cold and colder;
The fire drags in its net of light.
What hand is this upon my shoulder;
What face that waits my sight?

There can be two or three interpretations of that poem, which are we meant to choose? And then the only criticism which one can make about these poems is that they tend to be too staccato, but this early idiosyncrasy disappears in the *Poems in Scots* and *A Handful of Earth*. It is interesting to note, too, that nowhere is it possible to find a *sacrifizio dell' intelleto* for emotional intensity: he combines both. How many of our modern poets are capable of such a combination? Louis MacNeice in *The Earth Compels* and nearly every Futurist abandons emotion for intellectual wizardry which at first rouses curiosity but dies in the mind before the last unimaginative words are uttered. And then the passion, the lust for beauty: there are many ways of conveying it, like that of Baudelaire:

> Je suis belle, ô mortels! comme un rêve de pierre,
> Et mon sein, où chacun s'est meurtri tour à tour,
> Est fait pour inspirer au poëte un amour
> Éternel et muet ainsi que la matière.

or as in Soutar's, *The Sleepers*:

> I onetime thought, if I could lay my head
> Between thy breasts, and creep
> Into forgetfulness,
> Unshaken by the stress of too much loving; dead
> To all joy and pain,
> I should find sleep.
> A dreamless sleep lapp'd in content
> And subtle consciousness of thy near presence
> Thy breasts' quiet heaving. . . .

or in this delightful lyric with its opening reminiscent of "Lully, lulley, The faucon hath stolen my make away":

> O Luely, luely, cam she in
> And luely she lay doun:
> I kent her be her caller lips
> And her breists sae sma' and roun'.
>
> A' thru the nicht we spak nae word
> Nor sinder'd bane frae bane;
> A' thru the nicht I heard her hert
> Gang soundin' wi' my ain.

It was about the waukrife hour
Whan cocks begin to craw
That she smool'd saftly thru the mirk
Afore the day wud daw.

Sae luely, luely, cam' she in
Sae luely was she gaen;
And wi' her a' my simmer days
Like they had never been.

Does it not even suggest *Porphyria's Lover*? And is it not the cry of every man and woman? The beauty of that which we can touch and sense, the sacrosanct mystery of the body; and the mind, the poor maimed eagle trying to sublimate common yet paradisal passion.

We now approach the real purpose of our study. Soutar's poems in English are characteristic of the man—gentle, humble, trusting. It is true that there is no dynamic continuity, that the words at times lack colour as if one were looking at a spider's web and only saw the shadowy reflections of its creator, but it is when we read the poems in Scots that all the gnomic and mystical qualities are clarified. The tenuity of his English poems becomes a glorious activity in

The rits abune a deid man's breist
Hae brak the bruckle lire apairt:
The rits abune a deid man's breist
Hae wrocht their hand about his hert.

They gang whaur grief has never gaen;
Whaur love is mooter'd o' its micht:
They mirl the merkerin frae the bane
And lowse its cauld thochts on the licht.

Bricht is the thorn that was sae bare;
And brichter for the e'en that ken—
The fleurs that hing upon the air
Are memories o' buried men.

It is strange that in these Scots poems the note is sad, and that in the others there is a desperate effort to crush into the simple modulations all the joy, all the frenzy for life which the "dust-to-dust" keynote seems to strangle. His conception here, for example, is tragic:

The winter's awa' : and yonder's the spring
Comin' owre the green braes :
And I canna but greet, while a' the birds sing,
I canna but greet ;
For it micht hae been you, wi your sma' lauchin' face,
Comin' in frae the weet.

Definitely Soutar is in the great Scottish tradition : one or two of his ballads, particularly *Why the Worm feeds on Death*, have the authentic tragic note. All his Scots poems, with slight exceptions, are lyrical urns for the lamenting spirit :

Lift up your e'en and greet nae mair,
The black trees on the braes are still ;
And lichtsome in the mirkl'd air,
A star gangs glaidly owre the hill.

Sae far awa' fae worldly soun'
In laneliness it glimmers by :
And the cauld licht comes kindly doun
On earth and a' her misery.

How simple *The Evening Star* and yet how profound. It is this sensitivity to the corresponding entities of hope and despair which makes life not an unworthy desire but something to be cherished, pondered over until the release of the spirit from its cage. It is, indeed, Schopenhauer's tragic spirit in *Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* : " What gives to all tragedy that singular swing towards elevation, is the awakening of the knowledge that the world, that life, cannot satisfy us thoroughly. . . ." But it does not lead to resignation as Schopenhauer states. Resignation is the last stage in pessimism, and the poet to-day, especially if he is the progeny of an Age of decadence, must not, cannot be a pessimist.

Whither ? Yes. For how long ? Yes. But, Abandon Hope—No ! Poetry may be a memory bristling with sorrows and joys, " Yeas " and " Nays," a madness, maybe, denoting the ascension of one mortal who may elevate others—it can be all these, but it must not speak pessimism. All that is evil, destructive, diseased, devilish, brutal at the basis of existence should be wiped from the artist-thought : contemplate it, surely : but as soon as

poetry becomes impregnated with cankerous lingualisms bred by modern conditions it immediately fails in its function for the ordering of the mind and the vanquishing of its despondency.

And the poetry of William Soutar, although an inventory of lamentations is fundamentally idealistic. It may be individualized, but it speaks to all; it may lisp in old numbers; it may ignore our twentieth-century scientific terminology; it may seem to touch the mind lightly, but in the end, as all fine poetry does, it leaves with us its footprint. Take *Black Laughter* from *The Solitary Way*:

I dream'd that for an hour
I knew God's power,
And strove to keep his trust
With mortal dust;
But my frail, passionate heart,
Although apart,
Still humanly was moved
And blindly lov'd:
So that I stretch'd a hand
To my own land
And would have gladly ta'en
Sorrow and pain
From every shire, and slain
Disease and death.
But as I held my breath
Ere writing plain
The old world's epitaph,
I heard a laugh;
Again and yet again
Into my dream it broke
And, shuddering, I awoke.

or this:

Aince in the mornin' early,
The mornin' o' the year,
I dug deep doun intill the yird
And happit a' my fear,

I happit owre my fractious fear
And creid: "Lie laich ye füle:"
But when aince mair I gaed that gate
I heard the leaves o' dule.

I heard the chunnerin' leaves o' dule
And wudna bide to hear :
But whan aince mair I gaed that gate
I saw the fruct o' fear.

I saw the heavy fruct o' fear
Sae mindfu' o' my youth :
And raxin' up a desolate hand
I gather'd in my ruth.

I do not wish to decry modern poetic tendencies, but it would appear that the spirit in poetry, especially in England, is dying. It is true that after reading Shakespeare, Marlowe, Pope, Donne, Shelley, Wordsworth and Tennyson we realize that there is very little else to be said, and that if there is to be development it must be linguistically. Mallarmé tried it, but does the average Parisien understand the symbolical intellectualism of *L'après-midi d'un Faune*? The pseudo-modern school attempt it, but they are so occupied with the befogging and narcotic spell of verbal originality that any message they may have is lost in mechanistic phrasing. Only a great poet, a Tasso, a Goethe, a Shakespeare could succeed because they have a sense of proportion which is not in the modernists' legacy. To-day poetry has become a fungus of cerebration, and a very poor specimen. Just as procreation is dependent upon the duality of the sexes so poetry, if it is to be good, depends upon a duality of emotion and cerebration : indeed, Sachs' explanation in the *Meistersingers* is good :

Mein Freund, das grad' ist Dichters Werk,
dass er sein Träumen deut ' und merk'.
Glaubt mir, des menschen wahrster Wahn
wird ihm im Traume aufgethan :
all' Dichtkunst und Poëterei
ist nichts als Wahrtraum—Deuterei.

And that is compositely cerebration, emotion and all the diverse channels leading to the genesis of art. As in Walter de la Mare, poetry is the appearance of the dream-world, and the reaction to such a world is a delight in the materializing of what is essentially a dream-reality. But our poets of the Eliot school convey neither dream-world nor reality, and it is safe to say that the only poem of Eliot's

which may survive him is *Prufrock* and that alone will represent the whole modern nut-and-spanner movement. Accordingly, the type of work produced by a Soutar in Scotland and a de la Mare in England has a wider appeal, and the man susceptible to genuine art is a willing observer, for from these *camées* he reads the meaning of life, he perceives sorrow transported into joy, he walks with God in the garden of another man's soul, he himself becomes the poet.

By this elaborate explanation I have endeavoured to make it clear that poetry perishes as soon as it becomes tainted with linguistic artificialities. It cannot be denied that although modernism is the thermometer of to-day it is always, alas, at zero, and if art is content to portray the shallows it cannot hope to endure. Of course, it is true that there is no such thing as transition in poetry, only opposition, and to-day that opposition is exemplified in the fight between false and true aesthetics. There are always antagonistic tendencies in art, and we must not be alarmed if the weed appears to strangle the flower. It is only when we read :

> Unfretted from a wormy thought,
> By the still hour,
> The body planted in its plot
> A yellow flower :
> And every vein become a root ;
> And every artery a shoot.
>
> With joy of earth the burgeoning blood,
> So richly blest,
> Unfolded like a happy bud ;
> And from the breast
> Lifted ; until the mind became
> A flower of light, a fertile flame.

that we realize how futile and weak is the attempt to substitute anaemic similes for the noblest intellectual efforts of the true poet. There can be no substitution for the language, colour, flexibility and dithyramb of an *Iphigenia in Tauris*, or any of the great poems in world-history. These seek to convince us of the joy of existence like the music of Greek culture, and as no great art is ever reborn, in the true Spenglerian sense, the science of poetry as known by

Homer through the ages to the time of Hopkins of the *Deutchland*, must continue to be an endless patternwork of the spirit. William Soutar meets these demands, and although his poetry, like other art-genus, has great, personal spiritual value, its effect on Scottish literature, on the cultural history of Scotland is greater.

M'CALLUM SMITH.

IN PETUNIA BAY (SPITSBERGEN)

THERE is no night,
Only a shadow cast
By the dense spinning earth
As she swims past.
There is no day,
Only an endless light
Which neither breaks nor sets,
Waxes nor wanes.
Here where the day dies not
These things are plain.
Here every crumbling crag
Throws a small evening in its wake
Where the mist-ribbons grow,
The sea takes on a pearly gloom
And the green castles of the floating ice
Whiten, and lose their glow.

Soon the returning sun ,
Chases the fleeing shade from crag to crag,
From stone to willow tussock,
Swallows the drifting flags of mist,
Resets the floating ice like precious jewels,
And warms once more the brown crags,
The prone and stunted plants,
The white glacier,
The still fjord,
Circling lower and lower in the sky
Towards its long eclipse.

The tinkle of reviving glacier streams
Scarce breaks the established silence of the rocks.

The sharp edge of the evening moves
Swiftly across the bay.

The world is but a ball, and here I sit
High on the end and see it spinning round,
Heaving over and over in the sunlight.

Down there,
In that incredible region whence I came
Over the opal edge of the horizon,
Day succeeds night, day—night,
Day—night,
In regular succession;
And multitudinous machine-like men
Scuttling to and fro like clockwork toys
Observe this sequence there
In thought and action bound and circumscribed
Minute by minute, while the breath of life
Blows through them, they are ruled
By ticking time-machines.

The shadow moves—the world is but a ball.
The world is but a ball—and what am I?
I see my destiny in the sinking sun,
My desolation in the bare brown hills.
Alas! I am a stranger here,
I must return, alas! for also I—for I
Am one of them.

GEOFFREY DOBBS.

APOLLYON IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

YOU cannot dodge the Devil: he's too wide
To give you any chance to slip aside.
You must stand up to him defiantly
And exorcise him by Philosophy.
Tell him: "I don't believe that you exist!"
And baffled Satan will dissolve in mist.

EDWARD VANDERMERE FLEMING.

THE TALE GOES ON

WE must grow old.
The worn words
Are no longer trite
When on some Autumn day, perchance,
As we gaze at leisure
On the year's last loveliness
They suddenly smite,
Cold and sharp,
Across the heart's pleasure.

I must grow old;
On me will fall
The shadow of age.
Swift is the story in telling:
Ever less of the book remains—
Comes the last page,
And the story's told.

Earth holds no comfort
That may assuage
The pang of the moment
When realization
First cries in the soul:—
This land that we love,
The light of the morning,
The heavens above;
Ambition's far goal,
The labour we cherish,
All these must be left,
Be left, or will leave us.
Vigour must perish.
Of lover and friend
Time will bereave us.
It must be written,
It must be read—
"The End."

Oft I have searched
The heart's writing
About this thing,
Be the inditing
Of young or old,
When there is shown
The soul of a man
Clothed in the thought
That is his own.
I have seen the record
Of smouldering fear;
And pictures drawn
By imagination—
A fatal seer
In gloom-bound minds—
Of barren days
To be faced and borne
If life last long,
With vision blurred
And failing step;
When the heart no longer
To joy is stirred;
When fainter ever
Sweet sounds are heard;
And the cry arises:
There is truth
In the old saying:—
Whom the gods love
Die in youth.

I have read, too,
Many a lament
For the sweetness of life
So swiftly passing,
Uttered in colours
Most subtly blent
Of an exquisite,
Tender melancholy
That floats o'er the heart,
Dulling the fine edge
Of courage and faith:
And grievous words
Of resignation,
Hopeless in seeing
Man as a wraith,
Evanescent as cloud;
A pitiful being
With keen sensibility
Cruelly endowed,
Doomed to extinction.

And I have paused to look
On the shadowed pages,
Too often closed,
Of the sad book
Of the noble heart

That no hope assuages ;
Turning a face
Of resolute cheer
That hides from others
The tidings drear
Of loss and suffering
Heavily pressing
On mind and body :
When life's employment
Appears but to bear
Their heavy burden.
Seemingly cheated
Of life's enjoyment
They think of death
As a liberator ;
And in courage enduring
Are not defeated.

I have also seen
The thought of those
Of great knowledge—
As far as the wisdom
Of this world goes—
In humility owning
Their knowledge as naught.
Holding no key,
They have but touched
Tentatively
The outer gates
Of a kingdom fraught
With inscrutable mystery.

With compassionate
And lifted heart
I have pondered
The history of souls,
Seldom revealed,
That long had wandered
Through the mists of sorrow
To no visible goals :
And of those still pressing
Through the jungle of doubt,
Or climbing alone
To desolate places :
Forsaking the quest
Of a fair kingdom
For no pain or despair.

Those great explorers
With undaunted faces
Forever turned
Where the realized vision
Should stand at last
Revealed in beauty
As the sunrise burned
On the hills of light.

And I have gazed long
On lovely leaves,
Imprint of souls
That amid the throng
Of earth's difficult ways
Go with faces reflecting
An unseen light.
The happy ones
Who question no more ;
Doubt's shafts deflecting
By intuitive knowledge
Learned of the spirit.
These are the poor
Of heavenly kingdoms :
Poor in pride
And vain craving,
And arrogance
Of intellect.
These steadfast bide ;
Quietly braving
The assaults of pain
Ever resisting
The Hydra-headed
Disease of greed,
From the confines of self
Into life-liberty
They are freed.

Their fair records,
Light of the ages
Despite imperfections,
No angel in sorrow
Need cover.
Inscribed in gold
That gleams from their pages,
I find one word
Comes over and over,
Though on their lips

But seldom heard.
Of the heights and the deeps
It is the symbol;
Of virtue that sleeps—
How long, how long!
At the heart of life,
Waiting to rise
For the healing of man
And his troubles.
O "Caritas" . . .

These grow not old.
No silent rueing
Of fruitless toil,
No sorrows' fret
Nor fears' assoil
Can prevail
To the undoing
Of souls with their roots
So deeply set
In eternity.
For they hold,
As a volume closes
Another opens
And the tale goes on,
More beautifully told,
With less of dolour
And more of joy:
Illuminated
In stronger line,
In purer colour
In clearer design—
What is age or death?
The tale goes on.

ELIZABETH F. ALDEN.

HOMECOMING

THE days dragged on
Slowly,
Surely,
Perceptibly,
Imperceptibly
Changing,
Galloping
Restlessly
Forward,
Ever developing
Eagerness
Anticipation of the
Homecoming!
Then—
At long last
Came the day,
The hour
Appointed,
Destined
Of the gods,
Anointed
With the oil
Of gladness,
Climax
Of the years'
Anticipation;
As organ
Strong,
Majestic toned,
Begins
A prelude
Soft,
In undertone
Held,
Bound
By force
Indomitable,
Until
The music
Swells
Grows,
Rises high,
Subsides again,
As if to gather
Strength,
New energy
For further
Venturings,
Then,
Fortified,
Triumphant,
Noble,

And inspiring,
Its crashing
Chords
Reverberate,
And shake
With joy
The very stars
Of heaven!
So—
The departure,
Separation,
Silence
Of the years
Between,
Fears,
Loss,
Intervention,
Tears not shed
But felt,
Dreams
Circumambient,
Hopes
Anticipant
Gathering
Weight,
Power,
Fortitude,
Doubts
Recreant,
Dissolved
By air post
Or by cable,
Time burning
Bridges
In between
The past
And future,
Present
Hastening
Forward,
Onward,
Galloping
To the moment
Unfulfilled
Until—
The present
Breaks
Its dawning,
Sun's outpouring
Warming,
Rays
Of rapture
Penetrating
Being,
Filling
Every corner
Of the universe
With laughter,
Joy abundant,
Love triumphant,
Homecoming!

HUGH MARTINDALE.

It is particularly interesting to explore a writer of belles-lettres, pungent literary criticism and exquisite thoughtful verse as a dramatist, and *Land's End* by Mr. F. L. Lucas, at The Westminster Theatre, provided many excitements for the explorer. The crisp modern dialogue, which seemed at first as if it were going to take possession of the play and make it static, was broken violently into by the arrival of the long-absent husband, a he-man of incredible masterfulness who quoted Tennyson in the middle of his rantings against modern civilization, threatened to carry off his erring wife "like Cleopatra rolled in a carpet," and chartered an aeroplane for the job. The forced duel, the wife's timely defence of her lover, their staging of an "accident," gave many twists of unexpectedness, but the conflict between the loyalties and affections of son and daughter were the more subtle parts of the drama. It was, however, the literary man, in the person of the wife's lover, who in the end was the winner.

DYNAMICS OF AMERICAN POETRY: LXXIII

Life Invited Me, by Adele de Leeuw (Henry Harrison and Co.), a talented second book of poems, brings to the reader a number of quotable lyrics. They are colourful and possess a true singing quality. Miss de Leeuw was born in Ohio, and makes her home now in New Jersey, and we find her included in the *Anthology of New Jersey Poets*.

" To A Bold Lover " follows :—we find this in the New Jersey anthology :

Besiege the fortress of my heart
With all your skill—
One small invulnerable part
Withstands you still.

One secret chamber in a tower
Shall only fall
When you have prayed a silent hour
Within the hall

And left your sword upon the floor
And climbed the stair
And knocked, quite humbly, at the door . . .
I shall be there.

" Viewpoint " is a clever quatrain :

Spilling the bright, inconsequential gold,
Youth hoards no coins to use when it is old ;
While Age, forgetting what fortunes gaily spent,
Stuffs pennies in a sock with strange content.

The following sonnet, " If It Should Happen," conveys the ease with which this poet turns from one form to another :

If it should happen, in the days to come,
That you and I shall see all lovely things
Through different eyes, and Beauty leave us dumb,
And Happiness go by on silent wings—
If it should happen that these hearts of ours
That beat as one now in Love's perfect noon,
Should someday cease to feel the other's powers—
Be sure, my dear, the crying of the loon
Will be no lonelier than my one cry,
Its flight no wilder than the flight I'll make ;
For if the time comes when our love shall die,
I do not know what far-flung course I'll take—
I only know that I shall rise no more,
Once I have reached the farthest desert shore.

Miss de Leeuw sends us her conviction upon poetry :

" I believe that poetry should only be written as the result of an upsurge of feeling that comes from the depths of the writer,

and that if it is so written it will communicate that emotion to the reader. And I am sufficiently old-fashioned, I suppose, to believe in the salutary and difficult art of form, not only for the discipline it imposes but because form is the base of all art, and without it—no matter how many other qualities are present—the finished product is not as complete or as beautiful as it might be."

In *Anthology of Verse*, 1836–1936, from *Yale Literary Magazine*, edited by Alfred R. Bellinger, we find a significant and interesting collection of some hundred poets. The stream of versification moves along a normal national channel and illustrates the change in taste and technique throughout a century in America, and furnishes the only chance, as yet available, for reviewing the last hundred years of American verse presented through a single medium.

In the first decade, the influence of Milton, Moore, Wordsworth, Pope, Gray, Longfellow, Spenser, Coleridge, and Shelley, and we find a marked tendency of the Victorian era with mention of fairies and tears. This tendency fades as we turn the pages. Many authors are here, whose names have become illustrious—Edmund Clarence Stedman, with his " Westminster Abbey "—a lengthy and impressive poem, opening with :

Heroes of classic fame ! though Time's gray hand
Hath drawn the veil of years o'er Athens' towers,
And Bigotry holds sway, where, ruined, stand
The walls of Ancient Rome ;—though Freedom cowers
Before the stern array of tyrant powers,
And Justice shudders at despotic wrong ;—

Though withered are the coronals and flowers
Of burning eloquence and laureled song,
That to your golden meed and memory belong ;—

Edward Rowland Sill is here with three poems. From " Midnight " we give the first five lines :

Under the stars, across whose patient eyes
The wind is brushing flecks of filmy cloud,
I wait for kindly night to hush and calm
The wrangling throng of cares and discontents,
The tangled troubles of a feverish brain.

John Wheelwright writes interestingly of his purpose in *Rock and Shell* (Bruce, Humphries) :

" I have written *Rock and Shell* for people who know how to read. I aim at the head, to reach the active reason by addressing the sentiment through association, for the root of understanding is the will. *Rock and Shell* exercises the will to understand. It asks people to think of *other things*.

" Like all the other arts, poetry bears the same relation to modern life as it has in every other age and will bear in all the ages to come—provided there be two people left alive, the one to utter, the other to receive, the communication that can be made only in the song or chant, and that must attain final completion in the receiving mind. It is safe to say that poetry began when men stopped to wonder in the intervals between hungers, and that song was coeval with the first crude lines some driven hand stammered on a cave's wall. And still men are searching for that untaken life that eternally evades our contentless words and the symbols that rattle when we meet. Each who looks upon it for a moment, refusing to turn away his eyes, must express his too rare discoveries through whatever medium he finds most flexible to the creative will, be it music, painting, sculpture, the dance, architecture—that mass expression in which we still hear the singing of anonymous millions that wrought as slaves and as slaves died, only their stone song freed to soar over their ruin.

" There is a pernicious fallacy that the material of poetry and of the arts generally is necessarily limited to the subjects that are recognized as ' poetic '—i.e. that are without menace for the existing evils of social and industrial systems.

" For all life is the domain of poetry ; not only the ancient rituals of love and birth and death, but all vast happenings, from wars, strikes, the endless crucifixions of labour to the being of the smallest flower (for have not some of us seen, in a photograph of ferns, surprised by the eye of the camera—itself directed by a faithful hand and dedicate eye—the secret and startling, one might almost say, the startled, life ?).

" There is so much to be said on this subject, the nature of poetry and its relation to modern life (though why ' modern ' when it tinctures the very essence of life and issues with it from the fount ?) that I hate to let my remarks end here. And this is perhaps already much too long ! "

The author of *Music and Other Poems*, by Mary G. Reed (Bruce Humphries & Co.), is a well known musician and honorary president of the Massachusetts Federation of Music Clubs and editor of its official publication, *The Libretto* and a chairman in the National Federation. Founder of the Prelude and Crescendo Clubs of Boston, Mrs. Reed has conducted classes in music appreciation for the Massachusetts Department of Education. This musician writes us that to her, " poetry is music—a beautiful bit of music suggests a poem. Without music and poetry this world would be too weary, too material to be borne."

In *Pastimes in Arcady*, by Louise Simmons Talcott (Stone's Throw Press, N.J.), we find this poet turning constantly to the sonnet form,

writing with ease on many subjects. "Come with Me, Friend," one of Mrs. Talcott's many delightful sonnets, follows:

Come with me, friend, adown the path of years,
Back to the hour when first your soul sought mine
And placed the corner-stone of that white shrine
Where, in your dreams, I dwell. Protests and tears
Lack power to wreck the shrine your fancy rears.
Yet since love ne'er by pride can be defiled,
So yours has made me humble as a child.
Dear friend, your loyalty forever cheers:
Such loving service and unwearied zeal
To work me pleasure, suiting every mood,
Do overwhelm. Ah see! the balance wheel
Swings high; for great and good
Your gifts. While all I render for your weal
A heart replete with silent gratitude.

Mrs. Talcott has sent us several unpublished lyrics. "Reversal" shows this writer's sensitive talent:

A child—I thought, no gayer thing to look upon
Than poppies swaying in the grain. The years
Bring change. Now in their flame I see, through brimming tears,
But Flanders' furrowed, crimsoned fields—and my dear son.

ALICE HUNT BARTLETT.

Lines on reading that the secret of life may soon be scientifically explained.

OUT to the plains, my spirit, this wild night:
Meaningless time a whole circumference
Has swung and now is yearning to commence
Another with the same diameter.
Out, philosopher, to the lonely plains,
Swift to the wind attune your searching mind,
Bend to the will that wills you stupid, find
Lust for your part to be a fool for ever.

And now you know your folly crying sweet,
Speak of the truth that rides across the corn,
Tell of night's death that daylight might be born
And even tell where dead things go and how
A little stupid dust, some foolish gases
Sink to the earth and mingle with the air,
Cool to the feet and streaming through the hair
Of younger things as foolish but more fair.

F. F. GORELL BARNES.

POST-VICTORIAN POETRY

MR. HERBERT PALMER, whose *Post-Victorian Poetry* (Dent, 12s. 6d.) has just been published, as a scholarly man, one of those deep students of their subjects who allow nothing to pass unweighed, and a poet, moreover, who has not identified himself with any of the contemporary coteries, is by very reason more acceptable as a guide to the English poetry of this century than such as Miss Sitwell with her *Aspects of Modern Poetry*. Not that one would say of Mr. Palmer's volume, impartial and brilliant as it undoubtedly is, that it is the last word among contemporary words on his chosen subject; for the study of our poetry which should outdistance all possible rivals, would not contain such words as :

> Nearly all the old values and reverences have disappeared, and we are confronted by, what ? Only the next century will be able to tell us plainly.

The book of a still more deep-seeing critic than Mr. Palmer would not show a judgment showing, to put it so, so many fashion-made dents. He would know English poetry as a tougher, more enduring thing.

The better way in which to set forth how valuable a contribution Mr. Palmer's is to the study of a great subject (not to regard it as more than a contribution) is, after detailing his chapter headings, to quote a number of his summings-up. The headings are :

> Prelude to the Twentieth Century, Watson and Newbolt, Rudyard Kipling, Robert Bridges and Some Others, Prelude to the First Georgian Revolt, The First Georgian Revolt, The Irish School of Poets, Masefield, Gibson and Davies, Flecker, Chesterton and His School, The Second Georgian Revolt, The Georgian Pastoral Scene, The Poetry of the Great War, Some Prominent Independents, The Women Poets, Narrative Poets, Eliot's *Waste Land*, Modernism in Poetry.

" Too much Georgian ! " one is provoked to say, and it would be too much, too, one is provoked to add, if " Georgian " were not the misnomer that the term is.

As for the summings-up, to which we now pass, let them be in order of chronology. Of Newbolt, Mr. Palmer says :

> When Newbolt arose in the firmament of Swinburne and the Decadents and the Aesthetes, he was veritably a new bolt, and if not exactly like the lightning, it was just as if a great sea-wind had smitten the drooping lilies and roses and told even the rhapsodical Aphrodite to pack and begone. Here was health ! Here was great music ! Here was courage and sinew ! Here were all the healing patriotic ardours!

Of *Admirals All*, the book with which Newbolt arose in that firmament of Swinburne and the others, the judgment is :—

> Kipling's derived Moody and Sankey hymn-tunes and rants are not in it, neither are his music-hall jingles. But notes from

> the old Scotch Border-ballad, popular school songs, and nursery rhymes ramble through the pages. True, the Border-ballad had also got into Kipling, but there seems almost more of it in *Admirals All.* Self-evident also was the note of A. E. Housman, probably the first of the many occasions when his influence upon young poets intruded itself: . . . there is less tumpty-tum in *Admirals All* than in *A Shropshire Lad.* Tumpty-tum was Housman's besetting metrical vice, for though he borrowed something of the sentiment and external vesture of the Old Ballad, he took from it little of its metre.

There is a judgment included there, it will have been seen, of *A Shropshire Lad* also.

Of Hardy, the poet, Mr. Palmer's summing-up is :

> Hardy's quality and importance as a poet in verse have surely been exaggerated. He is too often static and laboured, indeed as a metrical artist he is occasionally execrable, which does not mean that he is not a vital poet—sometimes he is a very good poet—but his perfect lyrics are few, so that out of a very large quantity the anthologists have chosen a comparatively small number, these repeated over and over again. His original and unconventional use of words does not always hide the fact that the poem is little better than rough doggerel.

Of Robert Bridges :

> Though Bridges was a little lacking in lyrical passion, as also in sudden inspiration and fluency, he made up for nearly everything by his intellectual ardour, his vision, his sensitiveness, his diligent concentration, and his metrical learning. Though he was essentially a scholar-poet he was a very good one, and careful never to over-write, he frequently turned to prose for the purpose of expressing himself outside the exacting imaginative margins.

There is a flaw in criticism in those last words, to my mind. Given a real measure of imagination in a poet, there are no margins for him that are *less* exacting. In fact, they are so not exacting, that there is no room left for the word.

Of Stephen Phillips one gets :—

> Stephen Phillips had immense gifts ; but too frequently is his work fevered and slipshod, though so skilfully shaped to the stage-requirements—its verbal weaknesses probably largely the fault of his fulsome worshipping critics, whom he too whole-heartedly trusted.

In what immediately follows on Mr. Palmer's page, there is a " wobble" between any young poet who is over-praised in his youth and that particular youth, Stephen Phillips ; and the " wobble " renders the rest of the passage hardly worth quoting.

After speaking in terms of high praise of the sonnet-writing of Lord Alfred Douglas, Mr. Palmer continues with :—

> Other verse of his is lyrical and satirical, while he has written at least one narrative poem of high excellence. His satirical verse is little known, but many living people who remember his prose writing in the *Academy* and *Plain English* know that he has an extremely biting tongue, not unmixed with strong wit and uproarious humour. If some of his victims have writhed (and more than one of them has made him pay unduly for his recklessness), others less savagely hit, and immune in a good conscience, must have nearly split their sides with laughter.

Considerations of space now compel a large jump, that we may pass at once to the verse of our days that has received most attention, whether it deserved it all, or really deserved very little attention. After remarking that :

> The serious way in which this sardonic jest and frightfully clever literary medley has been received and treated, is proof enough to me that the desiccation and disintegration of poetry have definitely begun,

where the jest in question is *The Waste Land*, Mr. Palmer sums-up its author thus :

> Mr. T. S. Eliot, though not of Oxford or Cambridge, is a man of considerable learning, a notable critic (if somewhat eccentric and over-estimated critic), and *at his best* a poet in a cellar, and a rather good prose-writer.

On another page one reads :

> *The Waste Land*, apart from its influence, has been very much overrated, for it is no more than the skeleton of a great poem, something which Mr. Eliot did not clothe with flesh and raiment. So it takes upon it the appearance of an act of sabotage—a Creation of Disintegration. Another explanation is that he cut it down from a much longer poem, telescoping or dovetailing or jamming into one another the isolated fragments of what he chose to rescue, with a glittering eye all the time on the baffling and ridiculous ; again an act of sabotage, the destruction of his own poem, believing that this moon-stricken generation is worthy of nothing better . . . a more charitable explanation and interpretation of the poem is that it is a dream.

Let us pass now to a school of poetry, imagism :—

> Imagism, strictly realized, seizes only upon the tangible and visual (i.e. the Earthly Image) and avoids any excess of emotion that is likely to take the mind away from what can be clearly seen, grasped, and contemplated. It is, therefore, at its most essential and narrowest a poetry of statement, a poetry of the mind and

bodily sensibilities rather than of the soul, avoiding vagueness, transcendent symbolism, spiritual ecstasy, and stirring rhythms.

Then of the imagist writers :—

Surveying their work as a whole and disregarding the exceptionally good, one can say that while H. D. (Hilda Doolittle) is passionately refined and resigned, Richard Aldington is often bitter or sensual, F. S. Flint morbidly frigid, John Gould Fletcher despairing, and Ezra Pound annoyingly superior or perverse. Their influence for good and ill, on traditional poets as well as eccentrics and border-liners has been considerable, and will probably continue.

Two anthologies of Post-Victorian Poetry have been put forth into the world at the same time as Mr. Palmer's study of that poetry. They are the English Association's *Poems of To-day: Third Series* (Macmillan, 3s. 6d.), and Mr. Maurice Wollman's *Poems of Twenty Years: An Anthology:* 1918–1938 (Macmillan, 6s.). As the first covers only the years 1922 until " to-day," the second is the longer. One hundred poets are represented in that volume, compared with the seventy-three of the shorter book. As of those seventy-three names forty-six are found in Mr. Wollman's anthology, the two volumes together contain poems proceeding from one hundred and twenty-seven persons. It seems unnecessary to give more than these statistical details; for the poems make much the same impression that has been made by the earlier collections of Post-Victorian work.

These new poems of Mr. De la Mare—the few that are the best in the volume (*Memory and Other Poems*, Constable, 6s.)—are of the very subtlest psychology. That means that the work will amply reward the long, deep and careful student, while that work remains as good as wasted and lost on the world that Browning thought of as having " a coarse thumb and finger." There is, for instance, a poem called *The Assignation*. The poet was at one time " felled with such sickness" that " life seemed to be Nightmare's phantasmagoria." There was a compensation, however; for the very weakness of his body set his spirit free, which then " through wondrous regions strayed." In that one of the " wanderings best remembered " he beheld " a sloping meadow, rimed with frost," with black, pollard willows and a frozen brook, its tinkle of water hushed, and its sword-sharp rushes forsaken by the wind. The sharpness of the impression of that meadow scene on the mind's eye of the poet is to be grasped; for without that quickening first, the depth will not be seized of the impression of what happened. There was a white horse grazing silently in this " icy-still, grey-heavened, vacant scene "; not a horse a marvel of beauty, or strangeness, or fable; not one that *Una*, or Keats's *Belle Dame*, or a hero, or a god might ride; but a horse aged with time and toil, now at peace. And there, " on the stark hill's side the white horse cropped earth's sweetmeats."

Spellbound the watcher gazed at it—
hueless mane and tail
Like wraith of foam upon an un-named sea;
Until, as if at mute and inward hail,
It raised its gentle head and looked at me—
Eyes blue as speedwell, tranquil, morning-fair. . . .

Mr. De la Mare's thought, the time come to make a poem of this "recollected emotion," was that it had been as if for aeons those eyes and he had planned the mystic assignation, "in that lone waste, beneath that wintry sky." And his somewhat Wordsworth-like comment is:—

Strange is man's soul, which solace thus can win,
When the poor body lies at woe's extreme—
Yea, even where the shades of death begin—
In secret symbol, and painted by a dream!

There are poems of even subtler psychology than is shown in *The Assignation*, as "The Bridge":

With noble and strange devices Man hath spanned
River and torrent, raging in flood beneath;
But one more subtle than he ever planned
Will exhaust my last faint breath:
A bridge, now nearing, I shall walk alone—
One pier on earth, the other in the unknown:
And there, a viewless wraith—
Prince of the wreckage of the centuries,
Yet still past thought's fixed scrutiny, heart's surmise,
And nought but a name, yet: Death.

or as "Incantation":

Vervain . . . basil . . . orison—
Whisper their syllablings till all meaning is gone,
And sound all vestige loses of mere word. . . .
'Tis then as if, in some far childhood heard,
A wild heart languished at the call of a bird,
Crying through ruinous windows, high and fair,
A secret incantation on the air:
A language lost; which, when its accents cease,
Breathes, voiceless, of a pre-Edenic peace.

The psychology of those two poems is subtler than that of *The Assignation*, and subtler still is that of "Faint Music":

The meteor's arc of quiet; a voiceless rain;
The mist's mute communing with a stagnant moat;
The sigh of a flower that has neglected lain;
That bell's unuttered note:

A hidden self rebels, its slumber broken;

Love secret as crystal forms within the womb;
The heart may as faithfully beat, the vow unspoken;
All sounds to silence come.

One might say, but with infinite regret, that Mr. De la Mare's new volume, like "all sounds" will "to silence come." That would be to leave the state of poetry in England where it is. Where is it? Go anywhere where books are published, asking that question, and you will be told that the state of poetry in England is this: that there is so small a public interested in it, that it is not worth any one's while to print and publish it. That means that except to fufil the man's soul, it is worth no man's while to write poetry. A desperate situation!

J. A. CHAPMAN.

TITANS

Two volumes come from the Nonesuch Press, both of immense value and interest to the student. One is *Milton*, edited by E. H. Visiak, and the other *Walt Whitman*, whose editor is Emory Holloway —two outstanding poets, differing in almost every particular but allied by the great works they left to the world. To say that these books will be of immense value to students is to limit their object and achievement. It is inconceivable that any person would not desire to possess, and continually refer to, the volume on Milton. E. H. Visiak is known to all members of The Poetry Society by his research and his indefatigable interest in John Milton; the admiration he has for the poet is revealed in all his work. This book, edited by him, is trebly welcome in these latter days in which some writers have dared to be-little Milton, declaring that he and his work are both, in modern parlance, "on the shelf."

The chronological order of the volume adds greatly to the interest, and the prose, translated from the Latin, reveals how large-souled the man himself was. What Sir Arnold Wilson, in his Foreword, calls Milton's "incomparable and irrefutable Doctrine of Divorce" opens, as it were, a window in the poet's mind, revealing him writing so calmly and displaying no personal animus even whilst his sensitive nature was suffering deeply from the idle and worthless behaviour of his first foolish wife. As he says in the paper, *The Reason of Church Government*, "that neither envey nor gall hath enter'd me upon this controversy, but the enforcement of conscience only, and a preventive fear lest the omitting of this duty should be against me when I would store up to my self the good provision of peacefull hours." Consider too, how sane and unprejudiced are his words in *Areopagitica* pleading for entire liberty of printing all books, and this from one labelled as a morose Puritan. Sir Arnold Wilson notes that "his generation was not ready to receive the messages so impetuously uttered"; is the present generation any more ready? His knowledge and the voice of his spirit uttering noble truths are still pushed on one side; this important edition may, it is to be hoped, weigh the scales on the right

level. But, alas! for "the good provision of peacefull hours" that he hoped for, "eyeless in Gaza at the Mill with slaves." Yet still unconquered and unconquerable.

Walt Whitman is edited on the same lines and should prove of equal interest save for the sad fact that many do not appreciate, or even read, the poems of this splendid virile man. But he was, on entirely opposing lines, a giant such as Milton. The puritan poet dwelt in a mental library and his mind was stored with great learning; Whitman found his material by the sides of great rivers and in gazing over vast plains, he truly discovered "sermons in stones and good in everything." He made himself one with the soldier fighting and with the dying and the dead; he was at one with the great men of his time and with the felons and the drunkards; Milton lived a pure life and Whitman exulted (let the prudes forgive us) in being father to six illegitimate children. He gloried in the human body and could see naught but its glory; here he resembled Blake, and as Blake was, he was condemned for speaking plainly. His prose writings show us the generous mind of the man, his admiration for Charles Dickens, his deep appreciation of his hero, Abraham Lincoln, his praise for a poet so different from himself as Tennyson, and his tender letters to his old mother. As Milton was moved to mighty wrath at any prospect of the chains of prelacy being manacled to the people of Britain, so was Whitman roused at the slavery of human beings, and neither of these two Titans of the pen could trill a pretty song of love and summer, or winter, or of desolate self-absorbed little hearts. One stanza by Whitman will stand for both:

O to struggle against great odds, to meet enemies undaunted!
To be entirely alone with them, to find out how much one can stand!
To look strife, torture, prison, popular odium, face to face!
To mount the scaffold, to advance to the muzzles of guns with perfect nonchalance!
To be indeed a God!

If we do not allow these two poets to be Gods we must acknowledge them as Titans, towering above the small fry of verse-mongers, not only in their writings but in themselves as men. We can but be grateful for these books from the Nonesuch Press which reveal more intimately John Milton and Walt Whitman.

ARTHUR HOOD.

A RABELAISIAN YEATS AND A DELICATE GOGARTY

After I had read this nondescript play—*The Herne's Egg*, by W. B. Yeats (Macmillan)—it is called a stage play—I began to wonder how it would be received if produced at the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, where many of W. B. Yeats's plays were staged for the first time, and where a storm had been raised upon two occasions over his own play, *The Countess Cathleen*, and another by the late J. M. Synge, on the grounds

that the former was both anti-Irish and anti-Catholic and the latter anti-Irish; both plays have however survived. *The Herne's Egg*, owing to the present censorship exercised in the Irish Free State over anything of an erotic nature, would raise not only a storm, but a cyclone, if produced, unless a good deal of combing were undertaken, and in that case I fear that nothing would be left but a thing of shreds and patches! Not being easily shocked I endeavoured to discover what was behind all its buffoonery, indeed I might say slap-stick business, and wondered if the poet-dramatist has given us a burlesque of his own Celtic-twilight fantasies, so I was on the look out for humour, possibly pantagrulean, and discovered in the opening scene two Irish kings famous for fighting and hard knocks, going for one another like fighting-cocks, this time with swords and shields, whilst their retainers, who have had equal losses, dribble away and leave the august monarchs to fight it out. The King of Tara has been wounded in his left shoulder-blade, and the King of Connaught in his right. They sit down to take breath, all things being equal, as it is high time to have a rest after fifty battles—Conn of Connaught fought one hundred—and they start an interesting conversation upon the subject of two rich fleas, also a dog. This brings about a lull in the storm, and they are friends *pro tem.* I dare say something of this kind really happened in the grand old times. As a further hibernianism the author should have introduced a bottle of the wine of the country.

The next scene is still more pantomimic when a full life-size donkey on wheels is led in by Corney, the servant of the Priestess Attracta, and this animal is the reincarnation of some thief, for Corney says:

> A strong body, a level line
> Up to the neck along the spine.
> All good points, and all are spoilt
> By that rapscallion Clareman's eye!
> What if before your present shape
> You could slit purses and break hearts,
> You are a donkey now, a chattel,—

Congal, the King of Connaught, has learned that Attracta the Priestess owns a great hernery, and he orders Corney to pack his creels with herne's eggs, and determines to summon that lady. He gives the servant money to play upon a magic flute, and she appears, and says:

> For a thousand or two thousand years,
> For who can count so many years,
> Some woman has lived among these rocks,
> The Great Herne's bride, or promised bride,—

Congal tells her that the King of Tara and he have made peace after their fiftieth battle, and that both of them with Tara's chief officers are to have supper at his principal house at Tara that night, and how that a certain novelty and relish is to be Herne's eggs, and the creels are ready. Attracta informs him how

Custom forbids :

Only the women of these rocks
Betrothed or married to the Herne, . . .
Can eat, handle, or look upon those eggs.

Congal in reply refers to Ovid—kings in spite of their never ending business of war must in their spare time have exercised their brains in addition by translating into Gaelic choice morsels from the ancient Classics—and he takes the myths of Leda and the Swan, and Danae as symbolical of what is passing in the mind of the Great Herne. Then as the Connaught soldiers return with the donkey, Corney gives her the unhappy information of the eggs having been stolen :

The country calls them rascals,
I, sacriligious rascals that have taken
Every new laid egg in the hernery.

The feast is held in the banqueting hall at Tara, and Congal enters drunk and shouts :

To arms, to arms ! Connaught to arms !
Insulted and betrayed,
To arms—but if you have not got any
Take a table-leg or a candlestick,
A boot or a stool or any odd thing.

The King of Tara who is also drunk, enters and is told by the other king, who carries two table-legs which he has broken off a useful piece of furniture, that he had been insulted by his having had a common hen's egg put before him instead of a herne's egg.

Then follows a battle between the pair, a renewal of the old hostilities, and this time with table-legs, candlesticks, etc.

Tara and Connaught soldiers enter and the fight with the same weapons becomes general. The King of Tara dies from a broken head—died drunk—but as the King of Connaught has taken his kingdom and throne which makes matters equal, and he is therefore penitent,

And I can weep at his funeral.
I would not have had him die that way
Or die at all, he would have been immortal.
Our fifty battles had made us friends.
. . . we had
Forgotten what we fought about,
So fought like gentlemen.

This is characteristically Irish no doubt.

He then discovers that it is Attracta herself who changed his egg. Congal is already under a curse on account of his having stolen the sacred egg, and yet he vows vengeance against the god in spite of the curse :

I have the power to make him suffer;
His curse has given me the right.
I am to play the fool and die
At a fool's hands.

Attracta is to be made a means to that end, and six men are to assist in carrying out his plot without being asked whether they had any moral scruples or not.

I am the Court; judgment has been given.
I name the seven.

He calls out seven names including his own.

It is unnecessary to go into details as to what is in store for the priestess, the affianced bride of the Great Herne, the god, although there is a certain amount of humour in some of the objections raised by the six men who must become parties to this very unpleasant affair. One objects, for instance, with this plea:

"I have a wife that's jealous
If I but look the moon in the face."

Yet I am perfectly certain that if Queen Victoria had had this scandal whispered in her ear, she would have exclaimed: "We are not amused." What follows appears to have been inspired by Ovid's Metamorphoses, with touches of Apuleius and Joannes Secundus.

The curse falls upon Congal at last, for he is killed by Tom the fool with a kitchen-spit, and at the end a donkey is heard braying as if calling its mate. Attracta explains how Congal, for his sins no doubt, will re-enter this world as a donkey, and her remark concerning donkeys is quite unbecoming a priestess. Corney with a grin nearly as broad as her remark enlarges upon the same topic, then laughingly replies:

All that trouble, and nothing to show for it,
Nothing but just another donkey.

I am still puzzled to know why a poet so highly gifted as W. B. Yeats should have written what many must consider to be an almost meaningless farrago.

I have seen a hint expressed of failing inspiration, and yet I am convinced that we may still look forward to another *tour-de-force* from his pen in spite of advancing years, as I agree with Thomas Hardy, who wrote:

Sophocles, Plato, Socrates,
Gentlemen.
Pythagoras, Thucydides,
Herodotus and Horace, Origen
Burnt brighter towards
their setting day
Gentlemen,

Oliver St. J. Gogarty, whose poems have from time to time appeared in anthologies of poetry, has followed his remarkable book *As I Was Going Down Sackville Street*, by a collected edition of his poems, *Others to Adorn* (Rich and Cowan). Those who have read some of these in anthological selections, *The Atlantic Monthly*, etc., will, I have no doubt, welcome gladly this comprehensive and well-produced volume.

In the opinion of W. B. Yeats, Senator Gogarty is one of the greatest poets of our age; in point of fact, he is a poet of extreme culture, someone has named his poetry lapidary verse, as many of his poems are finely chiselled, which reminds me of some critic having likened Edgar Allen Poe's poem, "To Helen," to a cut cameo, or of Swinburne who wrote in his poem to the memory of Robert Burns "He carved in Rhyme."

Dr. Gogarty's previous book, which a schoolmistress would refrain from reading aloud to her pupils instead of *The Old Helmet*, or something equally innocuous, although some of its questionable details might be whispered gently at a mothers' meeting, must perplex readers to understand how a work of so robustuous an order, and poems of such delicacy and taste, could possibly have emanated from the same pen.

In the opinion of W. B. Yeats, the artist reveals in his art not his true self but his contrary self, his anti-self, and I have heard that poet declare that such was the reason why William Morris, who was an artist to his finger-tips, introduced into his prose romances strange creatures such as primitive folk and dwarfs, the direct opposite to his own personality, their conception being the very antithesis to his beautiful poetry. In his book, *A Vision*, Yeats calls that complimentary self the antithetic. In the poem "To Petronius Arbiter," we find this idea carried out:

> Proconsul of Bithynia,
> Who loved to turn the night to day,
> Yet for your ease had more to show
> Than others for their push and go,
> Teach us to save the soul's expense,
> And win to Fame through indolence.

According to Tacitus the days of the Proconsul were passed in sleep, and his nights in every form of gaiety, and yet he proved himself to be a most capable man of public affairs, he was named at Rome "Arbiter elegantiae." Now Gogarty himself, in spite of the wish expressed in his poem, is a medical practitioner, a poet, a prose writer of distinction, a senator and a classical scholar which attainments were never reached except through long and arduous endeavour. I admire the philosophy of his little poem "Per Iter Tenebricosum."

> Enough! Why should a man bemoan
> A Fate that leads the natural way?

Or think himself a worthier one
Than those who braved it in their day?
If only gladiators died,
Or Heroes, Death would be their pride;
But have not little maidens gone,
And Lesbia's sparrow—all alone?

All must take the same journey alone through the dark. From "Non Dolet" I quote the last verse:

Then do not shudder at the knife
That Death's indifferent hand drives home,
But with the Strivers leave the Strife,
Nor, after Caesar, skulk in Rome.

This certainly deserves a place in any dictionary of quotations.

Æ (George W. Russell) in a foreword wrote "the ideal of Oliver's genie was beauty and mystery achieved by precision." He referred to the poem "The Imagemaker," saying that when Gogarty "began to show us verses so finely carved that his genie seemed to have wrought in words as that craftsman in his own verse treated the hard jade,"

Hard is the stone, but harder still
The delicate performing will
That guided by a will alone
Subdues and moulds the hardest stone,
Making the stubborn jade release
The emblem of eternal peace.

His sense of beauty, which Æ held to be one of the great attributes of the Pleroma, the Divine Being, including all the emanating æons, is displayed in many of the poems. This lyric for instance displays great beauty:

I gaze and gaze when I behold
The meadows springing green and gold.
I gaze until my mind is nought
But wonderful and wordless thought!
Till, suddenly, surprising wit
Spontaneous meadows spring in it;
And I am but a glass between
Un-walked in meadows, gold and green.

And this stanza from "The Phœnix":

And then the silver isles out far
On leaden edge of Eastern seas,
Beneath a dappled sky, which are
Our daily lost Atlantides,
A moment seen and they are gone,
Bright archipelagoes of dawn
Are more to me, and solider,
Than the near hills that never stir.

In his poem "Sunt apud Infernos tot milia formosarum" there is besides its beauty a delightful optimism in his philosophy concerning the hereafter where will be found so many forms of beauty beyond the poet's wildest dreams:

Enlarged and free, the wings of Rhyme
Cannot outreach its purple air;
The generations of all Time
And all the lovely Dead are there.

There is another poem I like and it is somewhat "Browningesque." He calls it "Sub Ilice." The poet sees an ilex growing beside the river Dodder and it calls up a vision of ancient Rome.

"Is that Alba Longa. Yes; and there's Socrate,
Socrate? Yes in Horace: don't you 'vides ut,' you fool?
No! She's not a model . . . you will have her husband on us." etc.

And

I would through a ringlet whisper . . . "This is Virgil's
Confiscated farmstead which his friend in Rome restored,
The Mastersinging races from the North came down here merging;
And your hair was heir to colour the great Titian preferred.

In "Æternæ Lucis Redditor" his memory reverts to the late Robt. Yelverton Tyrrell, who was a Fellow of Trinity College, Dublin, regarding him as the restorer of the eternal radiance of the Roman capital, and who—

Revealed the studious colonnade:
The toga with the purple hem,
The temple that with quiet flame
Acclaimed the distant Emperor.
Æternæ lucis Redditor.

In "Non Blandula Illa" he shows how he must submit to whatever power it is that bears the consciousness away during sleep. It is not so enticing as he would have wished:

No easeful meadows nor delightful springs
Nor visionary islands lure it best,
But far off on the margin of the West
A sea-gray house whereby the blackbird sings.

Better however is "The Ship":

Over the golden pools of sleep
She went long since with golded spars;
Into the night-empurpled deep,
And traced her legend on the stars.

To turn to his still lighter verse, the following is a specimen:

To meet, when sails are lashed to spars,
The men to whom Earth's free from care
And Heaven a clock with certain stars,
And Hell a word with which to swear.

As I have pointed out Dr. Gogarty in his writings exhibits both his true and contrary self. I call it Jekyll and Hyde, that is where the manifest content and the latent content represent direct opposites; that is to say romantic classicism in its idealistic capacity as opposed to realism. In addition he discreetly covers certain realistic features with veils of classicism, which if left bare might be considered shady by hypersensitive innocents.

I would like to quote from more of his poems especially "The Crab Tree," "With a Coin from Syracuse," "The Plum Tree by the House," and others, but must be content with his sonnet to Virgil:

From Mantua's meadows to Imperial Rome
Came Virgil, with the wood-light in his eyes,
Browned by the suns that round his hillside home
Burned on the chestnuts and the ilices.
And these he left, and left the fallows where
The slow streams freshened many a bank of thyme
To found a city in the Roman air,
And build the epic turrets in a rhyme,
But where the woodland deities forgot,
Pan, Silvan, and the sister nymphs for whom
He poured his melody the fields along?
They gave him for his faith a happy lot.
The waving of the meadows in his song
And the spontaneous laurel at his tomb.

H. T. Hunt Grubb.

MODERNIST POETS AND OTHERS

The publishers of Mr. Louis MacNeice's new volume of poems (*The Earth Compels*, Faber and Faber, 6s.) must have heard the frequent criticism that several modernist poets seem to write exactly alike. For they affirm that "he is one of the few poets to-day none of whose poems could have been written by anyone else." They are rash men. If this book had been issued anonymously, very many readers would have attributed it to Mr. Auden or to some imitator. And I am now puzzled as to whether Mr. Auden imitates Mr. MacNeice. For, as the old nigger said of two other niggers, "Caesar and Pompey berry much alike, specially Pompey."

Mr. NacNeice and Mr. Auden, both men of undeniable talents, are alike in that each pours out pages of oracular common-place, distorted unintelligibility, and even puerile drivel. And each will, now and then, produce a sudden flash of living imagination or some turn of phrase that lingers in the memory. Mr. Auden did all that in his recent poem "Spain." Here are a couple of bits of Mr. MacNeice when he has something worth while to say. (He is on a steamship):

"The gulls that bank around the mast
Insinuate that nothing we pass is past,
That all our beginnings were long since begun."

And, in a poem to Mr. Auden,

> " All our prerogatives as men
> Will be cancelled who knows when ;
> Still I drink your health before
> The gun-butt raps upon the door."

And " June Thunder " is a rather striking piece of word-painting, though the apparent attempt at Sapphic metre is cruder than might be expected from so good a classical scholar as Mr. MacNeice.

Mr. Frederic Prokosch's first book of poems was received with considerable acclaim, and his second book, *The Carnival* (Chatto and Windus, 5s.), will probably get as much attention as any volume of poetry published this year. It will be welcomed by those who like the intellectual effort of solving puzzles, and by those who, discovering (by invention) meanings which would surprise the poet, unconsciously applaud their own powers of imagination. And, like Blake and Swinburne, he often gives us poems which, if spoken by a good reader, would fall very pleasingly on the ear but leave little or nothing in the memory, except, perhaps, now and then, the flash of a " jewel five words long."

Here is a typical poem :

> The falcon rides the waves of heaven,
> The dolphin flows into the night,
> Through all the wild and deep lie woven
> The curves of power and delight ;
>
> The deer lies bleeding by the brook
> Across whose mirror, by his breath
> Still gently ruffled; gently look
> The brown bewildered eyes of death.
>
> The day grows cool, the echo dies
> Across our silver age whose years
> Have charmed from all our roving eyes
> The real necessity of tears :
>
> The pent of heart, the swift of mind
> To suffering's unexhausted well
> Still flee with books and gold to find
> What single word might break the spell.

Mr. Prokosch does not markedly obtrude his political views. I do not gather that he considers, as several young poets still do, that the address of the Earthly Paradise is " C/o Moscow, U.S.S.R." But he is openly rude to Mussolini. It is a pity that he was not able to hear Il Duce, the disciple of D'Annunzio, with flashing eyes and inspired

voice, telling some fortunate members of The Poetry Society, "I, for my part, affirm that poetry is a necessity in the daily life of a nation." Much might be forgiven for that. Mr. Prokosch has created one phrase which I commend to my fellow-reviewers—"the loud hysteria." "What oft was felt" (in reading modernist poetry) "but ne'er so well expressed."

A Vice-President of The Poetry Society, Mr. William Kean Seymout, who has made a name as a poet and as a parodist, has amused himself and his readers by producing a book (*Chinese Crackers*, Boriswood, 5s.) of "alleged translations from the Chinese." These are brief poems of wise and witty reflection on current events or on things in general. Space is not available to print as much as I would like to quote, but here is one "translation" that will appeal to readers of some modern poetry:

Lament with me, old friend,
That my one-time promising son, T'ang Yu,
Is unable to earn enough cash by his poems
To pay for the fish and rice he consumes
In such large quantities.

Did not a Wise One say
That a young branch takes on all the bends
That one gives it?

I sent him to a school of honourable tradition
Where he acquired the abominable habit
Of insulting his ancestors.
Afterwards he went to the Halls of Learning
Where he learned the expensive process
Of academic failure.

I cannot understand his poems
And he hates mine for their lucidity.

Any readers of THE POETRY REVIEW who may be interested in Clifton College, directly or indirectly, are recommended to look at a collection of poems (Arrowsmith, 3s. 6d.) by C. H. St. L. Russell, who was a member of the staff of that famous school for some forty years. Mr. Russell has for over half a century been writing poems the character and quality of which are attested by the publication of many of them in *Punch*, *Cornhill*, the *Pall Mall Gazette*, the *Westminster Gazette*, *Country Life*, etc., etc. One noteworthy section consists of poems "in admiration of Austin Dobson and his cultured art," poems of which some might have come from the pen of that poet who, though now out of fashion and even sniffed at, carved for himself by his delicate craftsmanship a tiny but enduring niche.

Propertius is attracting translators. A version by Mr. E. H. W. Meyerstein, a poet and a scholar, recently received a notice in THE POETRY REVIEW. And a year or two ago Mr. Ezra Pound, occasionally but erratically a true poet, rendered what he was pleased to call *Homage to Sextus Propertius*, and surpassed himself in the perpetration of school-boy "howlers." For instance, Propertius wrote "Cimbrorum minas et benefacta Mari," which means, "the menaces of the Cimbri and the goodly services of Marius." (The Cimbri were a fierce and warlike people who caused grave apprehension in Rome by again and again defeating Roman armies in Gaul, until at last Marius overthrew them.) Mr. Pound seems to have a mental rag-bag stuffed with scraps of information. From it he dug out the remembrance that the Welsh call themselves "Cymmry," and then, as "minas" looks rather like "mines," and as his rag-bag told him that gold used to be worked in Wales, he made the poet, who lived far too early even to hear of the existence of Wales, talk about "The Welsh gold-mines, and the profits Marus (*sic*) got out of them." No school-boy ever bettered that.

No such fun will be found in Dr. A. S. Way's recently published translation (Macmillan), for Dr. Way is a scholar. Incidentally he must hold the English record for the number of his translations from Greek and Latin. Anybody who wishes to know what Propertius has to say, and who prefers a verse-rendering to one in prose, will find Dr. Way a trustworthy guide. He uses his favourite metre, anapaestic hexameters like those of William Morris's *Sigurd the Volsung*, but with an a b a b rhyming scheme. I cannot understand how Messrs. Macmillan can publish so neat and well produced a book at so low a price as half-a-crown.

Among the poets who have in the last year or two read their poems before The Poetry Society is Mr. William Platt, who is a member of the Society, which too many of these poets ungratefully are not. Forty-odd years ago he was hailed by William Sharp, Grant Allen, Materlinck, and others, as a coming genius. Fame has not yet obeyed their invocation, but Mr. Platt has, undeterred, gone on devoting the leisure of a busy life to the writing of music, of introductions to natural science, of poetry, and of novels. Though nowadays I mostly confine my novel-reading to the classics and to what have been called "works of fiction pre-occupied with capital offences," I happened to read Mr. Platt's last two novels, *The Passionate Spinster* and *Temperature* 105°, and I can affirm that they are among the very few books which I have been moved to re-read immediately on turning the last page. He has now published (*At Seventy*, John Bale, Sons & Curnow, Ltd., 6d.) a brief summary of his philosophy of life. He is comforting to those for whom the Psalmist's goal is not far off, for, in effect, he tells that there is still plenty of ground whereon to score sundry more tries.

Poets have written novels, novelists have written poetry. To take our own land alone, we have had Goldsmith, Scott, Meredith, Hardy, Stevenson, Kipling, who thus " scattered abroad the golden grain " with both hands. And to-day we have Masefield, de la Mare, and sundry others. Of this company a notable member is Miss Stella Gibbons. She sprang into fame with her first novel, the ever-green *Cold Comfort Farm*, which won the *Femina Vie Heureuse* prize. Messrs. Longman have just published her *Nightingale Wood*. Reading this, her latest and best book, I felt again and again that I would have declared her a poet, even if I had not known that she is already enshrined in the anthologies. Little flashes repeatedly silhouette a character or illuminate a background. From time to time we come upon a sentence which we can swear was word by word lovingly handled by the writer, as if she were letting a string of pearls trickle through her fingers. These things are some of the marks of a poet! She and Evelyn Waugh, though both are otherwise quite different from each other and everybody else, are alike in the ability to make Puck sit close beside us and, time and again, suddenly give our risory muscles an unexpected tweak.

I have heard the book criticized as somewhat lacking in formal construction, but it satisfied me. The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are not identical in their planning. The former leads up inevitably to the preordained fall of beleagured Troy. The latter is a tale of varied adventures leading up to a home-coming and settling down, involving, indeed, the " liquidation " (to use the phraseology of that *régime* which some young poets so strangely admire) of Penelope's troublesome suitors but a rather less monumental climax than the sack of a city. Anyhow, Miss Gibbons liquidates the suitors in her tale artistically and much more comfortably, though the reader is kept a long time wondering how on earth she is going to be able to bring this about.

EDWARD VANDERMERE FLEMING.

A POET LAUREATE'S DAUGHTER

The achievement of Mrs. Daryush in *Verses: Sixth Book* (The Author, 5s.) is so fine an achievement, that one's words of acknowledgement sound all too poor. Take this as perhaps not the best poem, yet how appealing:

Once more
The sea of Winter breaks upon a waveless shore;
I hear a sound
Of rippling (as of bird-song) over sunny ground;

Again
The tide of icy darkness, of starvation-bane,
Has turned to bring
Our ship to the warm cliffs (like orchards white) of Spring,

Where soon
The mariners will land, as they have often done,
Whistling the while,
Impatient to explore another summer-isle,

To know
This one, too, of the endless archipelago—
Gladly, once more,
Have they forgot their charter, with its term obscure.

There is a human sorrow that is so stunning, and that feels so cruel, that it brings the teaching regarding Providence of earth's greatest teachers almost within touch of donkeys' braying. That is a dreadful thing to say; but it is true. This sorrow is that caused by the death of a child, when that child has lived long enough to make its being constitute a new paradise for its parents, the mother especially, and yet not long enough ever to have walked or talked. This paradise, followed by this sorrow, appear to account for the poems facing each other on pages 14 and 15 of Mrs. Julia Wickham Greenwood's *Can No One Understand?* (Putnam's Sons, 7s. 6d.). To give the first:

I nurse your beauty at my breast
In a white dream of perfect rest.

You feel no stir, you hear no sound
As with my soul I wrap you round.

Thus sleep drifts from the night, and thus
The peace of God flows over us.

Many poems the writer almost immediately forgets, at least to the point of his or her not being able to say them without the book. Other poems, more swiftly written, haunt the composer for days afterwards, and the memory never loses one word of them. One would venture the belief that to Mrs. Greenwood that poem made one of the haunting ones.

A distinctive book of verse is *Full Circle* by Carla Lanyon Lanyon (Shakespeare Head, 4s. 6d.). The quiet beauty of her poems has impressed me in her earlier volumes and the new ones have an increased intensity of vision and feeling which makes them memorable. The long title poem is of the Millennium, not necessarily remarkable for originality of ideas, for some of the new ways of living are sharable with Lytton and Forster, but so tender and human in treatment that it haunts the mind after reading. There comes the old temptation into the new paradise, the yearning for knowledge, "a canker in your sweet content," and the would-be truth-finder, the mystic of his day, resolves on departure to a lonely place where he may only think for the remainder of his two hundred years span of life. His woman tries vainly to dissuade him:

" Had you gone daily to the darkened pit
Or sweated at the loom's monotony,
Had you welded steel or driven the rivet
Or sailed a small ship on the wintry sea,
You would have slept in the shadow of my hair
As the wholly tired sleep, and though that hair was grey
You had not questioned all the gods that were
Nor cried for answers at the end of day."

" Ah hush, we cannot go back, we must go on.
Out of the last silences I shall find
Beyond mysticism the Concrete Mind
The prop that this our world is built upon ;
The ultimate truth, and maybe it will be
So simple that a child might learn it,
So near that our long sight cannot discern it
Feeling our eyes that are too blind to see.
Mankind shall be amazed when I have found
That truth is merely such and such ;
I shall draw the broken circle round
Till the ends touch! . . . .

" I shall not turn back, though you would hold me.
As you love me, give me farewell.
I shall go through the city that would fold me
In its comfortable unasking spell ;
Where the crag weathers the wind on the top of a hill
I shall unravel the riddle and have peace ;
Strange peace, that comes when the cities crack
And the patient seas turn no more back
From the shore, and the south winds cease." . . .

Those who were brought up on " The Jumblies " were not always aware of Edward Lear as a painter of landscapes as well. I recall my own surprise when shown some of his pictures by my old friend, Miss Gertrude Lushington, his god-daughter. I now learn that he wrote " The Pobble who had no Toes," for her! Lear's attractive and industrious personality is admirable reconstructed by his biographer, Angus Davidson, in *Edward Lear, Landscape Painter and Nonsense Poet*, (Murray, 15s.). Lear's early handicaps of poverty and ill-health, his urgent industry, his sensitive friendships, his delight in children, his humour and his melancholy, are all caught in this record of his activity; and he is shown cherishingly and veraciously with shadows of weaknesses and failures. The book is illustrated with many of Lear's pictures and drawings and is full of quoted lines.

Three very interesting papers comprising *On Shelley* (O.U.P., 5s.), elucidate some of the scantily or misreported incidents in the lives of

Shelley and Mary. Edmund Blunden gives us Shelley of " the wild notions and the sweet ways " at the moment of his expulsion from Oxford when his ways too were a little wild also. The available material was scanty but it has been very well built upon by one of Shelley's best exponents. Gavin de Beer examines the discrepancies surrounding Shelley's " atheist " signature with a biologist's precision, and by a system of elimination proves the probability of there having been several such signatures in Swiss hotel registers, one at least of which was removed and others tampered with. Sylva Norman tells of her discovery in the Bodleian : that of an unremembered publication of Mary's " Proserpine " during her lifetime in the *Winter's Wreath* Annual for 1832. She also makes some shrewd comments on the style of Mary's prose fiction—those voluble pot-boilers upon which she was driven to waste her talent and scholarship. Mrs. Blunden is perhaps a little hard on Mary's Mythical Dramas. Though their verse never pretended to match Shelley's, at least they have the merit of " serving their primary purpose, that of forming a delicately classical setting for some of Shelley's perfect lyrics," as we noted in THE POETRY REVIEW, when A. Koszul edited them in 1922.

The word " sacro-egotism " occurs in Signor Tom Antongini's *D'Annunzio* (Heinemann, 15s.), and to any one the bread of whose life is admiration of the " sacro-egotist " this study may be whole-heartedly recommended as a royal dish. It might be described in a phrase—" a Lord of Superlatives through the eyes of a Lord of Superlatives." For D'Annunzio could write this of himself :—

> There is implanted in my heart an excessive desire for knowledge and glory. This often inspires me with a deep and torturing melancholy, and it makes me weep. I am intolerant of any control, quick to anger and as ready to take offence as to forgive. I am loyal and fiercely contemptuous of vileness : an ardent lover of New Art and of beautiful women : peculiar in my tastes : tenacious of my opinions : brutally frank : prodigal to the point of wastefulness : enthusiastic to the pitch of folly—

" No description,"—this is Signor Antongini's comment—" could be more exact." His manner to himself of describing the great Italian poet is shown in this :—

> Not to be prodigal, not to be patriotic, not to be selfish, not to be sensual, not to be kind, not to be irresolute, would be as impossible for him as it would be impossible for him to change his sex or his age. But it is very possible for him to be patient in the morning, irascible at noon, easily swayed at one moment and stubborn as a mule the next.

Until another account is published, one may perhaps leave Gabriele D'Annunzio to pass through these moonphases, oftener with this volume shut than with it open in one's hands.

The title of this work by Dr. Closs of the University of Bristol,

The Genius of the German Lyric : an historic survey of its formal and metaphysical values (Allen and Unwin, 18s.), suggests such a study as would place the reader, persevering to the end, in possession of more understanding (one assumes he would begin with some) of what differentiates German lyrical poetry from Greek, Latin, Arabic, French, English, or what you will. Actually, it is not at all a book of that nature, but a history of German lyrical poetry on the familiar lines of so many histories of single " Books " in the *corpus* of the world's literature. That point established, one has only praise for the volume's fullness and completeness. That a history, for English readers, of German lyrical poetry should be full and complete was all the more desirable, in that, as Dr. Closs believes, his is " the first comprehensive study of its kind in the English language."

It has been said that this is a history of its subject on familiar lines. The poets pass before us in a long historical procession. Thus at one point our attention is held by Dach, and then, in their order, by Schottelius, Harsdörffer, Von Zesen, Gryphius, Scheffler, and Gerhardt. Then, to jump to another period, our attention is directed to Stolberg, Voss, Hölty, Von Matthisson, Claudius, Schubart, Schiller, and Hölderlin : again a jump, and we reach Rilke, George, Binding, Schröder, Jünger, Scholz, and Kolbenheyer.

In view of the probability that the work will pass into a second, third, and later editions, let it be suggested to author and publishers that the book would be more valuable, if provided with translations of the very early minnesongs. Why, one may ask at this point, should the last verse of Claudius's *Täglich zu singen* (p. 250) and the first quotation from Rilke (p. 417) be given only in unrhymed English translations ?

The author of *Digger's Fancy*, A Melodrama in Blank Verse (Sidgwick and Jackson, 3s. 6d.) is an assyriologist, archaeologist and excavator of international repute, so that the fact that this output of his Muse should be replete with varied learning and keen observation will occasion no surprise. The book is, however, much more than a piece of scholarship capably put together ; it is a poetic achievement of no mean order.

Dr. R. Campbell Thompson makes his pleasant story of the chance meeting of a man and maid, their danger from Arabs exasperated by the bombing of their tribe, their rescue through the mediation of a nobly minded if wily old sheikh, who is a war-time friend of the hero, and their ending up as lovers, the framework for a whole gallery of Eastern pictures, both drab and gay, now vigorously, now opulently limned. Furthermore, the book has the additional merit of expressing the conclusions of an erudite and active mind in verse which follows the great traditions of English literature, and proves that these traditions in the hands of one who knows how to profit by them, are as sufficient a medium for the expression of things modern as the tortured obscurities and uglinesses of modernist " poets." Indeed, on reading

Dr. Thompson's strong and flexible lines one is driven to the conclusion that the real reason for the inartistic and unmusical eccentricities of the modernists is the lack of the requisite ability to make proper use of the great media inherited from the past.

Digger's Fancy is full of accurate touches and descriptions which could only emanate from one with practical experience of the East. When this practical knowledge is combined with classical and ancient oriental lore the results are rich and striking. Such is the description on page 6 of Babylon to-day with its suggestion of evil or semi-evil powers so characteristic of ancient Sumerian and Babylonian religion. There are some really fine nature pictures, for instance that describing the dawn on the Metlili hills (p. 9) and that beginning "Give me a north Iraqi mound in Spring," on page 14. Then there are passages of pure glowing oriental romance, as, for example, that on page 16, commencing:

> "O magic wealth of sleepless Shehraza
> With Master Sindbad shading wistful eyes
> Seaward from Basṛah 'cross her argosies, etc."

Dr. Thompson's lifelong study of the Ancient East comes out well in the delightful song (p. 27) of an Egyptian princess of the Tell el-Amarna period who is to be wedded to the King of Assyria, even at this period a sufficiently formidable personage to loom on the mental horizon of a young girl, although but a very dim prophecy of the type of monarch who seven hundred years later was to strike terror into the known world as "the great king, the mighty king, the king of hosts, the king of Assyria."

Another powerful reconstruction of the past is the long passage (pp. 32 to 37) describing the sensations of an Assyrian soldier of the Royal Guard of Shalmaneser III at the approach of battle in the campaign of B.C. 854 against the Syrian League under Benhadad of Damascus, a reconstruction of mental processes all the more convincing as coming from one who himself experienced active service in the East.

Space will not permit of any further detailed references to the many varying types of interest which the poem contains, but tribute must be paid to the vigour with which the squalor and cheap westernized vulgarity of much of the modern East is emphasized. But equally well does Dr. Thompson by contrast with the East bring out the even cheaper and nastier vulgarity of the modern West, for instance the passage on jazz and modern superficiality and cacophony in general (pp. 11 to 12) is both withering and true.

A man presented with *Aphorisms of Yoga* by Bhagwan Shree Patanjali, done into English from the original in Sanskrit with a commentary by Shree Purohit Swami and an introduction by W. B. Yeats (Faber & Faber, 7s. 6d.) might be expected to ask two questions. Namely, Who was Patanjali? What is Yoga? Let those questions be answered here.

Patanjali was a learned man of very ancient time in India who collected, let one assume, probably adding to them, certain aphoristic sayings dating back to earlier teachers of India's Way of Wisdom-attainment; for so it may not unreasonably be called. And, of course, that Way of Wisdom-attainment is Yoga. A man who lives the life laid down, practising the rituals prescribed, seeking Wisdom that way, and deliverance from rebirth and the yoke of sense-things, is a Yogi. (It is odd that Mr. Yeats, so deep a student, so long a coadjutor of the very learned Shree Purohit—to him the world owes the best translation in English of *The Geeta: the Gospel of the Lord Shri Krishna*—it is odd that he should appear not fully to have taken in the difference between *Yoga* and *Yogi*).

There is a large literature extant, in this language of Europe, and that language, and that other, on the subject of Yoga. That being so, no more is required from a reviewer of this addition, but to commend it most warmly; warmly, for the excellence of the translation from the Sanskrit; warmly, because of the exceeding valuableness of Shree Purohit's commentary. And this specimen of both may be added, where the commentary begins with the second sentence:

> Yoga is controlling the activities of mind (chitta). Chitta is mind as a whole, the mind-material. The word *yoga* comes from *yuja*, *to join* or *yoke*. It joins the personal Self and the impersonal Self. When the three qualities of mind-purity, passion, ignorance—are controlled,

At least four of the papers in *Studies in Humanism* by Dr. J. W. Mackail, O.M. (Longmans, 12s. 6d.), interest us deeply. The first is an oration on the pursuit of poetry delivered at the inauguration of an American institute, which outlines and indicates the function of poetry as the form of creative art in which the spirit of humanism displays itself most fully and intimately, in its relation to the problems and conditions of the present day and the actual world. Prof. Mackail deals with the two sides that poetry has in common with all other arts, being subject to laws that can be taught and learnt, historically studied and practically applied, but also being not merely an art, but a fine art; that is to say, it is a form of creative human activity, bearing an intimate relation with the energies of human nature, and with the outlook of man upon the material and spiritual world. "Poetry, then, according to its formal and technical definition, is patterned language, the material of words wrought by art into patterns; and it gives pleasure, partly sensuous and partly intellectual, which all pattern gives through, and in proportion to, its decorative fitness and beauty. If we regard it not on its technical side, but in its substance and meaning, it has a corresponding definition: it is the art of progress which makes patterns out of the subject-matter of language. That subject-matter is life. All poetry worthy of the name creates or reveals the pattern of some fragment or aspect of life; and the greatest

poetry creates or reveals the pattern, the ordered beauty, of life as a whole."

Prof. Mackail concludes that poetry, like democracy, is on its trial. "The patterns of life it offers to us, the interpretation of life with which it presents us, seem to many unreal and remote. It speaks a strange language, thin and ghostly to the ears that are not attuned to it; it often holds itself aloof from, or mingles but passingly with, the main current and texture of occupations and endeavours, of private pursuits or public interests. Each alike suffers from the divorce that is between them. A democracy which excludes or ignores poetry cuts itself off from one of the main sources of vital strength and national greatness. A poetry which is out of sympathy with democracy is thereby out of touch with actual life. But the future that lies before both is splendid, if both will work in harmony, if national life is inspired and sustained by poetry, and poetry takes nothing less than that life for its province, gives it a heightened meaning, brings out from it the latent patterns of beauty after which it blindly but unceasingly aspires. Poetry, as Dryden said of it, is articulate music: the music to which life moves, and in which it finds its discords resolved." . . . But too many forget that "the inheritance of the present age is not merely the present, but the whole past as well. Of that inheritance, the great poetry of the world, from Homer downwards, is the most precious portion. It preserves for us, still alive and still having power to move and kindle, the best of what mankind has thought and felt, the most perfect forms into which it has cast its vision and reflection, its emotions and aspiration. And thus the study of poetry is part of democratic education; and the poetry of democracy, kindled by that study and appealing to a nation educated in it, will be the articulate music of national life."

The essay on the Italy of Dante and Virgil reminds us of much that was said at meetings in Florence during the recent Dante Pilgrimage. Dr. Mackail agrees that "it is a matter of common consent that Dante is not only the greatest of the poets produced in Italy since the age of Virgil, but also a national poet in the fullest and most vital sense. From the beginnings of the Risorgimento until now, he has been accepted and proclaimed as the poet and prophet of Italy." Obviously Dante was one of the most important of the intellectual and spiritual forces which went to create Italian unity and nationality, and to show the path for the mission of Italy as well as for her effective existence. In the wider sense, Dante enables us to establish the highest claim which can be made for poetry, that poetry is the ultimate expression of history within the language concerned—a theme which Dr. Mackail develops in the course of his learned paper, in the course of which he points out that "Dante wrote in Tuscan; but the Tuscan in which he wrote was in fact Italian. He created Italian literature; and the immense power of words over human affairs is nowhere shown more remarkably than in the influence exercised on later history by

that great achievement." This valuable paper is followed by one on Dante's *Paradiso*, which recognizes that "during the last generation the study of Dante in England has immensely increased, not among scholars or theologians only, but in a wider circle. He has fully secured his place, even in popular estimation, among the great classics who are the common inheritance of all nations and languages. The Italian poets as a whole do not bulk so largely in our reading as they did a hundred years ago. Neither Petrarch, nor Ariosto, nor Tasso is now accounted a part of the ordinary reading of educated English men and women. Guarini, once a common school-book among us, is probably only read now by professed students of literature. Alfieri and Metastasio are spent fames. Leopardi, a poet in whom not only the Italian Risorgimento, but the new European Renaissance of the earlier nineteenth century, found an interpreter of unsurpassed potency and beauty, has never reached a wide audience among English-speaking readers."

The contribution by Dr. Mackail to the study of Milton is welcome, particularly at this moment when attempts are being made to debunk both the literary and personal reputation of the great English poet and as an offset we have a new edition of his verse and prose. Prof. Mackail devoted the Warton Lecture in 1924 to an examination of Bentley's *Milton*, particularly interested in the attempt to edit and revise *Paradise Lost*. In many respects, although a scholar, Bentley was deficient in the qualities necessary for his great task—notably he had only a superficial acquaintance with Italian poetry, whereas, as Dr. Mackail points out, "Milton drew as much from the Italian as from the Greek and Roman poets. 'My younger feet,' he tells us, 'wandered among those lofty fables and romances which recount in solemn cantos the deeds of knighthood'. He had read and assimilated the great mass of Italian poetry from Dante down to his own contemporaries. He knew the *Divina Commedia* with an intimacy of knowledge rare then; for already Dante had fallen into his long eclipse; from it as much as from any other source external to himself he drew the rhetorical evolution of his thought, the loftiness of his style, his management of diction and phrasing. He had saturated himself with Boidaro and Ariosto; to the *Orlando Furioso* the debt of *Paradise Lost* is even greater than to the more obvious sources of Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata* and *Sette Giornate*." However, as Mark Pattison in his notable life in the English men of Letters, asserted—"Appreciation of Milton is the last reward of a consummated scholarship"—one that Bentley never attained to, for with all his great powers, he was beyond his depth.

The other addresses by this delicate and accomplished critic, tracing humanism as an expression of the human spirit in various literary examples, particularly those on Allen Ramsey and the Romantic Revival, Hurdis and the Poetry of the Transition, and Ariosto, must

be left to readers to analyse themselves. He is always exact, penetrating and felicitous.

Three new volumes in Everyman's Library (Dent, 2s.) concern us. Frank Swinnerton's *Georgian Literary Scene* is readable but ephemeral. In poetry he attaches far too much importance and gives far too much space to the temporary, artificial grouping of post-Victorians and literary snobbery labelled " Georgian Poetry,"—now happily defunct and practically forgotten. The best of the Georgians and those who survive were not voluntarily constituents of the group, which if it had had any real significance or vitality would have gathered strength and adherence as the years went on and taken the falling away of the present Poet Laureate and others as a natural process. In a very different category is the volume of Walter de la Mare's poems, stories and essays,—a delightful volume, representative of a present-day writer who has made and retained his own individuality and place in contemporary literature. Similarly, the volume of the Hindu Scriptures, containing hymns from the Rigveda, five Upanishads and the Bhagavadgita, is a desirable, nay, invaluable permanent possession, now available to every man.

The gardens and countryside of yesterday and to-day are admirably picked from by Joan Rutter in her Anthology of Flower Poems, *Here's Flowers* (Golden Cockerel Press, 8s. 6d.). Her delightful and personal selection is well set off by the book's format, wood engravings by John O'Connor, and a characteristic introduction by Walter de la Mare. Altogether a book one wishes to have in the house and not merely on tap at the library.

Among books of members' verse there is a new volume by Doris Major, *Leaves in Lamplight* (Shakespeare Head Press, 2s. 6d.) which shows a definite advance in inward feeling and outward shapeliness. It is a good sign when these grow together, since they are inseparable in true poetry. " In Quest of Light " shows their admirable combination :

> Ask of the winds of heaven if true light
> Abides among the stars,
> (Pale flowers that shed their petals in a night,
> Before the dawn, rending the dusky bars
> Of darkness, overwhelms them for a space).
>
> Not there the everlasting, changeless light
> That dreamers seek in vain,
> Whose radiance is veiled from mortal sight
> Save in brief gleams—in sunshine after rain,
> And loveliness imagined, felt or seen :
>
> Nor in the hearts of men who walk in ways
> Of twilight through the length

Of their embittered and bewildered days ;
Yet, the blind singer in his soul has strength,
Having known darkness, to behold true light.

Harold Allman-Lewis uses the colloquial phrase in *Love's Interludes* (Stockwell, 2s. 6d.) for most of his epigramatic thoughts and fragments of philosophy. A longer and more ambitious piece of prose-verse gives a curious psychological recording of some Egyptian history.

Karen Witham has not done full justice to her poetic fancies in *Sacrament of Summer Days* (Stockwell 1s.), nor to the undoubted sincerity of her sad title poem. Her work shows awkwardness of phrasing and movement and a tendency to fall back on expletives to help out rhyme and scansion. "Forsaken," however, shows that better things may be expected in future :

Can the ashes leave the dust
To pacify a lover's lust ?
Can a soul that once has fled
Return to heal a heart that's dead ?

Would dark Pluto from below
Release my love from Hades' throe,
As in times unknown did he
Return to earth Eurydice ?

The magic of the Lyre is dead !
Buried deep in Hebrus' bed :
Lost the note that charmed all things ;
Lost all hope to pluck its strings.

The poems in *Transmutations* by Michael Hale (Favil Press, 1s. 6d.) read like translations from the Chinese ; for though their philosophy is of the occident their terse statementary sentences resemble reproductions from the orient. Some of the imagery also suggests this influence, as in "Hallucination" :

Bluely, bluely the green grass caresses the water.
The water echoes with eyes and flowers.

In the shadow of a mountain
A group of birds are playing Mah Jong.
One of them seizes the top of the mountain
And flings it into the water.

The flowers become fish
And burrow into the mud,
The eyes take wings
And fly away—

Leaving the desert without an oasis.
The camel without a mosque.

THE POETS' FELLOWSHIP.

THE PREMIUM EDITOR'S REPORT

The Premium Editor finds himself in a great difficulty. He has never, as far as he can recollect, read so many good contributions in this competition. There are (say) ten authors to whom he would like to make the award, and out of these he has, with much reluctance, chosen six! Further, for the same reason, he has a disproportionate number in the list "Highly Commended."

Most of the poems receiving awards are short lyrics, and they show striking variety.

It may be of some interest to note that three out of the six premium winners are women, and three are men.

The awards are as follows: N. K. CRUICKSHANK, Stoke-by-Clare; E. F. A. GEACH, Penylan; HILDA M. SLADE, Ramsgate; R. D. BIRCH, Lichfield; R. G. DUFF, Teignmouth; GEOFFREY DOBBS, London.

Out of the authors "Highly Commended" especial mention must be made of KATHLEEN ANDERSON, I. SUTHERLAND GROOM, M. E. MITCHELL, T. PITTAWAY and IAN WATTS.

HIGHLY COMMENDED:

Elizabeth F. Alden, Haddenham
Kathleen Anderson, Kingswood;
Elizabeth Barrett, Seaford;
M. D. Cameron, Kirkhill, Inverness;
"Cloudrider," Budapest;
Alice E. Collinge, Harwood;
Margaret Locherbie-Goff, London, N.;
I. Sutherland Groom, Bristol;
Pauline Huthwaite, Hawkeswall, Notts;
M. E. Mitchell, London, N.W.;
G. S. Oddy, Ryde;
Iërne Ormsby, Thurgoland;
T. Pittaway, Frome;
Brenda F. Skene, London, W.;
Mabel K. Toovey, Amersham;
Ian Watts, Plymouth.

COMMENDED:

Vera I. Arlett, Worthing;
Lettie Cole, Broadway;
Reginald C. Eva, Hove;
Francis Gallagher, Dorchester, Mass.;
M.H., London, N.;
Christine L. Henderson, Montreal;
Jessie B. Heard, Bristol;
Chloris Heaton, Berkhamsted;
Stuart Lowrie, Malvern;
Redcliffe McKie, Hove;
Enid W. Mark, South Croydon;
C. Morton, Cwmtillery, Mon.;
M. L. Ormsby, Dublin;
E. Curt Peters, Chalfont St. Giles;
H. Plimpton, Philadelphia;
Phoebe Rayner, Rivington;
Janet Urquhart, Naples.

The usual premium offer for the best poem or poems submitted to the Premium Editor during the month (without limitation of subject) is continued. Not more than four lyrics or one long poem should be submitted. MSS. should reach "The Premium Editor, THE POETRY REVIEW, 36 Russell Square, London, W.C.1," by August 1st, accompanied by stamped addressed envelope, and if criticism is desired, 2s. 6d. (For a more detailed postal criticism, 5s. should be

sent.) It is essential that entrants to this competition be members of The Poetry Society or registered subscribers to THE POETRY REVIEW, and that each poem bears the name and address of the author.

ENID W. MARK, "after the unforgettable experience of hearing her speak at the excellent Recital of Verse on May 28th" attempted to express her feelings in the following lines to DAME SYBIL THORNDIKE —AN APPRECIATION

Somebody dreamed,
Somebody wrote
Words on a plain, white page,
But the words and the dream were spans apart,
Humanity read, yet the human heart
The vision failed to gage.

Somebody spoke
The written words,
Those words from the plain, white page;
The misted mystery came to men,
Vision revealed was within their ken,
Their sadness was assuaged.

You were the one
Who spoke the words
And interpreted the dream;
You tore the mists from the hidden Sun,
Its light for the world you somehow won,
We caught that secret gleam.

So much you give,
So little we
Can say even when we would;
Our reverence bows a humbled head,
The greatest tribute is never said,
But—we have understood.

AN EXAMPLE OF ASSONANCE

(*To the Editor of* THE POETRY REVIEW.)

SIR,—I have read with great interest the article by Terence Heywood on "Unrhymed Poems of Yesterday," and it occurs to me that an admirable example of Assonance is found in the very old Scottish singing game "Bee Baw Babbity":

"Bee baw babbity,
Babbity, babbity,
Bee baw babbity,
Babbity bis the barley.

Choose, choose wha ye'll tak'
Wha ye'll tak', wha ye'll tak',
Choose, choose wha ye'll tak',
A lassie or a laddie.

I wadna' ha' a laddie, o,
A laddie, o, a laddie, o,
I wadna' ha' a laddie, o,
I wad ha' a bonnie wee lassie.

Kneel down, kiss the ground,
Kiss the ground, kiss the ground,
Kneel down, kiss the ground,
Kiss a bonnie wee lassie.

I make no claim for these lines as poetry, of course, but they do have both vowel and consonantal music, while containing not a single technical rhyme, and on this account are interesting.

Calle Antonio Bellet 190, Providencia, Santiago de Chile. 4th March, 1938.

Yours faithfully,
NANCY POLLOK
(Mrs. N. Firkins).

"THE TWILIGHT OF THE FALSE GODS."

(*To the Editor of* THE POETRY REVIEW.)

SIR,—Mr. Raw's excellent letter, under the above caption, in your issue of January-February, should serve as a welcome warning to those who expect the average intelligent reader to accept as poetry the specimens of "nonsensical and ill-sounding verse" so often submitted for his approval in many of the most reputable papers of the present day. The phrase which I quote is Sir J. Squire's and is none too severe. Other able critics have, from time to time, railed against this deplorable evidence of the revolt against traditional poetry, and some have even stigmatized it as pathological,—that is, the product of disordered minds.

There is an expunged line in Byron's *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* which, in my opinion, tersely expresses all that need be said as to the future of such bizarre experiments:—"Hayley in vain attempting something new"—; and I doubt if ever there was a time when his matchless satirical genius was more needed in the interests of English poetry, pure and undefiled, than the present. It was my privilege to study English under a great Englishman—the late Mr. A. C. Bradley—who probably knew more about English poetry than any critic of his time. He left me in no doubt that poetry can be written only as the great masters wrote it,—that is, in obedience to certain canons which, like the laws of thought, are eternal and immutable, and that all who stray lawlessly in craftsmanship from such models are but hostages to oblivion. And, believing that he was

superlatively right, I gladly endorse Mr. Raw's opinion to the effect that it is a serious failure in criticism to reject poems which possess high merit merely because they are written in the traditional style, in favour of such as reflect but little sense together with an utter scorn of all rhythmic laws. "Mountains are in travail, and a ridiculous mouse is brought forth"! Serious literary solecisms are forgiven only to men of genius; and, until those who offer us only such wares as tortured *vers libre* and kindred inanities, prove their claim to the title, it behoves them to be conventional.

Poetry is the highest of the arts, and admittedly the greatest gift bestowed on man. Hence, those who have written it supremely well have achieved imperishable renown. The true poet's work lives when most other human creations are either but dimly remembered or completely forgotten. He occupies a niche in the temple of fame even above philosophers, statesmen, warriors and kings. I am not concerned with the justice, or otherwise, of that verdict. I am constrained, on appeal to history, tradition and to fact, to accept it as the universal judgment of mankind. Those, therefore, who have attained to such heights are not likely to be cast from their pedestals by the amorphous poetical experiments of wayward modern stragglers on the lower slopes of Parnassus; and THE POETRY REVIEW will deserve well of all true lovers of poetry by maintaining, as suggested by your able correspondent, an inexorably rigorous attitude towards all productions which are unworthy of inclusion in the noble heritage of English poetry.

I am, Sir,
Yours faithfully,
D. M. MACRAE,
Melsetter, Southern Rhodesia, Feb. 28th, 1938. M.A., M.D.

A Bolton member writes: I should like to thank you for the help you have given me in my work and for the encouragement I receive in reading THE POETRY REVIEW. Several people have lately remarked on the improvement of my poems and someone who has some influence in the literary world has been especially interested. I feel The Poetry Society and its criticisms which I have had done for me occasionally have been largely responsible.

An Australian Rhodes Scholar, Mr. M. R. Thwaites, of New College, has won the Sir Roger Newdigate's Prize for English Verse—Oxford's most coveted literary award. The subject for the poem was "Milton Blind." Mr. Thwaites, whose father is headmaster of Ballarat College, Ballarat, Victoria, came up last October, after three years at Melbourne University. He is aged twenty-two and is reading Modern History at Oxford. He had previously contributed short lyrics to school and university magazines.

THE CHRISTIAN RENAISSANCE IN CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE

TWO years ago the publication of T. S. Eliot's *Collected Poems* broadly proclaimed what until then only a few close observers had realized: the innovator of the modernist movement in English poetry had undergone a revolutionary change; the author of *The Waste Land*, poem of disillusionment and despair, travelling through the dark, stark ways of *The Hollow Men* and along the tentative path of *Ash Wednesday* had reached at last the triumphant peace and security of *The Rock*. Now Mr. Aldous Huxley stands beside him as a vivid example of the power of the Christian leaven: his last book, *Ends and Means*, proclaiming boldly what his earlier work, while apparently obscuring yet tentatively suggested, and at which his novel *Eyeless in Gaza* very broadly hinted.

To the enlightened critic and reader this was not an unheralded development. In certain types of satire the prophet unwittingly reveals himself, and it is notable in this connection that vilification of contemporary life and society is a common characteristic of the prophets of the Old Testament. Therefore it is always advisable to watch the satirists carefully: a passionate hatred of society may be fertilizing the ground for a valuable blossoming.

At this moment of history, evidences of the Christian development in literature are of primary importance. The cold academic view of literature as a study divorced from life is superseded by an almost universal recognition of its supreme value to and in life itself, and in England at least those who believe in the superior might of the pen as opposed to the spurious worth of the sword are not willing but eager to dedicate their powers. Generally speaking, the younger writers choose the political, the more mature writers the Christian, way. The true solution to a problem is usually found not first but last.

It is clearly impossible in a brief article to give anything like adequate treatment to a subject already growing so vast that Christians may well "take heart for the future," realizing that once again literature is proving true to its

best traditions, in spite of the many divergences of the post-war period. In so brief a summary, severe limitations have to be imposed, and reference can only be made to the two most dramatic examples of Christian conversion.[1]

The Waste Land, published sixteen years ago, is a finished example of life's futility: a picture of human beings in a vacuum, waiting for death:

> Pressing lidless eyes and waiting for a knock upon the door.

The Hollow Men, three years later, shows little improvement, and ends on the note of deliberate aimlessness of the last nursery-rhyme stanza:

> This is the way the world ends
> Not with a bang but a whimper.

But *Ash Wednesday*, five years later, marks a sensational advance. The prevailing note is Christian acceptance, in spite of despair. The whole poem, pregnant with poetic riches and covering a wide field of Christian thought, demands careful study. Then come the lovely *Ariel Poems*, including *A Song for Simeon*:

> Light upon light, mounting the saints' stair.
> Not for me the martyrdom, the ecstasy of thought and prayer,
> Not for me the ultimate vision.
> Grant me thy peace,

and finally, after some short lyrics, the triumphant choruses, the powerful Christian affirmation of *The Rock*.

The equivocal attitude of the critics on the appearance of the *Collected Poems* suggests a phenomenon often observed when Christianity is at issue, and the clue lies in the words of Jesus: "Ye shall be hated of all men for My name's sake." An artist who avows his Christianity is immediately suspect: the world can no longer come to terms with him. Which is natural, since "the whole world lieth in the hand of the Evil One," and the artist who has sworn allegiance to Christ has certainly broken faith with the world. There can be no compromise; there is, in fact, no choice, even if

[1] The use of the word "conversion" arouses too many speculations to be explored here. It may well be argued that the phenomenon is never as spectacular as it appears, because the seed of the apparently sudden occurrence has really been lying long dormant.

the declaration of his new allegiance threatens the worldly success of his art. He has accepted values beyond temporal judgments. T. S. Eliot is now accused of " escaping to Anglo-Catholicism and a barren traditionalism,"[1] and most of the reviews of his book studiously ignored the vivid Christian element, concentrating on the technique. The content being suspect, only the form must be considered. This behaviour persists also in contemporary criticism of Gerard Manley Hopkins: he is accepted as an important technical innovator, and ignored as a religious poet of almost unparallelled power and significance. This attitude to the Christian writer rather implies that he must be accepted, if at all, *in spite of* his Christianity, which seems to overlook the fact that the greatest poetry (I refer here, in common with the usually accepted methods of survey, to the poetry of the last seven or eight hundred years) is and always has been strongly Christian in feeling, if not necessarily in actual expression. It would be admittedly difficult, for example, to divorce the religious element from *Paradise Lost*, though even such a feat as this would not dismay some contemporary critics. Shakespeare's best work is impregnated with Christian references and religious thought. Spenser, Chaucer, clearly Langland, and almost all the greatest poets of the Romantic Revival, are essentially religious. Often the development has been similar to Eliot's own—a comparison with Donne suggests itself.

To turn briefly to Mr. Huxley.

After the publication of one long narrative poem, *Leda*, his work followed an unswerving line in a crescendo of sordid satire, reaching its climax in the novel *Point Counter Point*, a book so riddled through with vice that to survive the reading of it completely untouched is in the nature of a spiritual triumph. Some books are as infective as plague: it appears to be a fact that Swinburne was fatally and permanently influenced by a book lent to him when he was eighteen. But *Point Counter Point* was

[1] David Daiches, *Literature and Society*.

Mr. Huxley's *Waste Land*. The novel that followed, *Brave New World*, showed an interesting development, and a marked change. The world he had hitherto depicted must, unless some form of salvation come quickly, inevitably crash: it was heading for destruction, a modern Sodom and Gomorrah which by its very nature could not survive. But where to look for salvation? Mr. Huxley was searching for an answer. Then, four years later, came *Eyeless in Gaza*, a strange spiritual and emotional "biography," with its pronouncedly mystical ending:

> . . . this contemplative approach, this effort to realize the unity of lives and being with the intellect, and at last, perhaps, intuitively, in an act of complete understanding.

There follows a long passage beginning: "United in peace." Anthony Beavis knows he may be about to face death. But he is undismayed:

> Dispassionately, and with a serene lucidity, he thought of what was in store for him. Whatever it might be, he knew now that all would be well.

The author of *Point Counter Point* has travelled far. Readers who would prefer the hideous early work of both Mr. Eliot and Mr. Huxley to sink into oblivion would be overlooking the fact that this kind of evidence of spiritual development is of the utmost value to religion.

The sub-title of *Ends and Means* is revealing: "An Enquiry into the Nature of Ideals and the Methods employed for their Realization." Ten years ago, most readers of Mr. Huxley's novels would not have believed that the word ideals, and an inquiry into their relevance to life, could in any way interest him. Rather in the manner of Mr. Michael Roberts in *The Modern Mind*, another book by an advanced modernist thinker who acclaims Christianity as the solution to contemporary problems, Mr. Huxley leads the reader to the desired goal by the road that will most appeal to those who look askance at orthodox religion. Sociology, economics, national and international politics, all these are practical subjects, and the man who can write about them as Mr. Huxley writes is certainly an author worthy of attention. Then, finally, come the chapters on

religious practices, beliefs and ethics. This is where Mr. Huxley has been leading us. And now it becomes clear that while he has been writing vitriolic social satire he has all the while been studying the mystics. Nauseated with the world as he found it, he has been searching for another. His final conclusions are of greater value than the pronouncements of a saint who has never fully confronted and experienced evil. Not only is *Ends and Means* necessary from the religious point of view, it is invaluable as psychology. Mr. Huxley tells the plain truth, an unpopular but necessary thing to do. His book will therefore be met often with hatred, and for this reason alone its importance is self-evident.

It is now five years since in a brilliant prophetic book *The Christian Renaissance*, Professor Wilson Knight heralded the development that is now advancing so rapidly in English literature :

> We can see a Christian Renaissance rising in the near future. God has made the seed to grow after his own wisdom ; and a mighty harvest awaits us to-day. . . We may therefore expect a new Christianized literature and a newly-poetic Christianity. . . A new poetry will arise, and a new drama ; and all our arts and our religion will alike recognize that each and all serve the one great purpose of their existence.

As for the new drama, developments here are sensational also : for example *Murder in the Cathedral*, *The First Legion*, a play concerned with miracles and life in a Jesuit community, Dorothy Sayers's beautiful play *The Zeal of Thy House*, Christopher Hassall's *Christ's Comet*. So, in spite of the tragic chaos in European politics, in spite of the satanic clouds that gather and overhang while men worship false gods and destroy themselves and each other in pursuit of horrors masquerading as ideals, we, looking to literature, may still hope to gather in the mighty harvest grown from God's seed, finding in its riches the grain and substance of a new life.

DALLAS KENMARE.

Mrs. Baker Russell, of Mougins, A.M., France : I enjoy THE POETRY REVIEW very much, especially out here where it is difficult to keep in touch with English poets and poetry.

APPASSIONATA

OH heart, you are bound.
Where would you be?
What call do you hear?
What do you see
Break through on a world that would have you forget?
Out of the darkness what strange visions form
That you fret and pull seawards; shudder and fret
As a ship dragging anchor strains to the storm?

Why do you linger?
And what bids you go
Into the dark
Where outward tides flow?
Where cold mists are sweeping, what mystery clings?
On the rise of the wind what voices ride high?
What powers are passing with fierce beat of wings?
In the quiet luminous rift of the sky
What faint far flute in the silence sings?

And why when it fails
Does an empty lull
Monotonous rock
Like waves through a skull?
There is something must break,
Some safe-guard be shed
Of body or mind
Ere the moment be sped
And the stone be raised
To honour the dead.

So blow, oh ye winds, oh buffeting gale
Break the last link, the hollow sails fill.
Grind through the shallows, rend timber, rend sail;
Seaward, press seaward—yea wreck if ye will
But let not the flute's faint urgency fail
Let not the whisper of voices be still.
Oh winged ones, ye spirits of music, prevail!

IAN WATTS.

THE RELIGIOUS ASPECT OF WORDSWORTH'S *THE PRELUDE*

(Books I and II)

MUCH deep, religious feeling is not necessarily associated with any fixed creed or dogma. Many parts of *The Prelude* have an atmosphere of " joy and purest passion," noble aspiration; tranquillity, a sense of harmony in the universe," the discipline of pain and fear," that is reminiscent of parts of the Gospels.

Religion divorced from a thorough sympathy with the natural things of this world has always seemed to me such a false and barren creed. Creator and created are too far apart, and slavish or uncomprehending worship not only does not elevate human conditions but consistently degrades them. There is a deeper, a truer religious sense in atheists like Satni in Brieux's play *False Gods* than in the superstitious multitudes who cry to Isis. Wordsworth needed no third person to intercede between his God and himself. Christ told his disciples to pray directly to " *Our* Father." In both cases, communion between the Divine Being and a human creature caused an out-flowing and an in-flowing of a spirit that strengthened and uplifted. Wordsworth says of this communion :

> " *mountings* of the mind come fast upon me "
> " quickening virtue
> a tempest, a redundant energy
> vexing its own creation,"
> " to brace myself to some determined aim."

He feels himself to be " an agent of the one Great Mind, creator and receiver both." The divine element in the poet leaps to its glorious fusion with the " Wisdom and Spirit of the Universe."

Wordsworth's God is more shadowy, more incomprehensible than many other Gods. He is spoken of not as an all-loving Father, or a Dread Avenger, or a remote and indifferent Deity, but as a

> " Soul that art the eternity of thought
> That givest to forms and images a breath
> Of everlasting motion."

In many ways Wordsworth reminds one of the seers and

prophets. Like them, he advocates "plain living and high thinking." He is conscious of being called or dedicated to some service that will demand his ripest energies and admit of no trifling or drawing back from the plough.

> "to the open fields I told
> A prophecy; poetic numbers came
> Spontaneously to clothe in priestly robe,
> *A renovated spirit singled out*
> *For holy service.*"

Later he describes himself as "a pilgrim resolute." Similarly, he retires into solitude when he would commune with his own soul, with his "Eternity of Thought" and be still. Like the great mystics, Wordsworth was lost, in his lonely places, in an ecstasy of contemplation, when the surrounding objects, which, like himself, were manifestations of the same spirit, were made aware as never before. It is this vision, this sublime, painfully-joyous insight which one stumbles after in reading *The Prelude*. We yearn, but see not when our eyes are holden.

I read something lately that seemed so very true. The words have re-echoed as I went again through *The Prelude*:

> "Supernatural religion is the refuge of those who cannot rest in things natural. It is not easy to find this rest, nor easy to abide in it. But once it has been tasted, all other rests are a weariness."

If ever a man found rest in things natural, Wordsworth did. And how shallow, unsatisfying, inconstant and fleeting are other rests in comparison.

For Wordsworth, joy and sorrow, the friendliness, the cruelty of nature have all been merged into a single sensation of beauty. He recognizes in both pain and fear "a grandeur in the beatings of the heart." His deep tranquillity arises from his consciousness that there is harmony and purpose in the Universe. It is not a chaos of pessimism and blind stumblings, of irreconcilable things.

> "Dust as we are, the immortal spirit grows
> Like harmony in music—there is a dark
> Inscrutable workmanship that reconciles
> Discordant elements."

Communion with God entails obligations as well as conferring benefit. As in the parable of the talents, they must give to whom it has been given. All artists, to whom has been given special inspiration, special divination, can only find their truest happiness in feeding the clear flame. Wordsworth felt this in a high degree. He would be :

> " Like a false steward who hath much received,
> And rendered nothing back."

He realizes that it is fatal for him to waste his energies in a constant, mechanical routine or in pursuit of empty frivolities.

The sense of awe, of holy fear, that is inseparably bound up with any religious feeling is very evident in Wordsworth. Even as a lad, he felt that his poaching activities offended that generous spirit that brooded, like a guardian over its creatures.

> " I heard among the solitary hills
> Low breathings coming after me, and sounds
> Of undistinguishable motion, steps
> Almost as silent as the turf they trod."

Again, on the lake, he is overwhelmed by the mysterious grandeur of the scene. It is so terrifyingly immense that, for a moment, his human comprehension is too dwarfed to grasp it at all. He rows away with trembling oars like one who said " Lord, bind mine eyes. Thy beauty is too awful to behold."

But it is a wholesome fear. It purges away vainglory and hypocrisy. It ensures that this worship shall not be a cringing abasement, but " a sanctifying of discipline." It is something inbred ; a heritage from generations past to whom Nature has spoken with no uncertain voice. Wordsworth says of this :

> " By the impressive discipline of fear
> By pleasure and repeated happiness
> So frequently repeated and by force
> Of obscure feelings representative
> Of things forgotten."

In childhood is this sense particularly strong.

Wordsworth's religion makes him lose all desire for

superiority over his fellows, for selfish advancement, for petty disputes, and envies, hates and jealousies. Like Chekkov, he feels "it is essential in this world to be *indifferent*." (It is hard to find a better word in translating the Russian, but it doesn't mean callous or untouched or selfish; just "not fussy." Jesus expressed it for all time in:

"Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."
"Take not thought for the morrow . . ."
"Consider the lilies. . . .")

In one of his most tranquil and spiritual meditations, Wordsworth felt the soothing understanding of Nature while he was having a rest after a stirring race. All envies were blotted out, and only a wide generosity remained:

"all pleased alike
Conquered and conqueror. Thus the pride of strength
And the vain glory of superior skill
Were tempered; thus was gradually produced
A quiet independence of the heart."

And as for miracles, Wordsworth found them all around him. Every miracle requires faith, and Wordsworth had that "seeing eye" that found

"Books in the running brooks.
Sermons in stones and good in everything."

Because some of us are incredulous or unseeing, does that mean the seers are wrong? In the country of the blind is the man with sight to be stoned? Flaubert has said something like this: "You have only to look long enough at a thing to find it interesting." Wordsworth found miracles because he looked for them. The treasure is there if we are prepared to seek diligently for it, but we do not dig deep enough; we hurry over so many surfaces.

Such infinite possibilities in the human race! Jesus has said so plainly:

"The kingdom of heaven is within you." "God is your Father." "Ye are sons of God,"

Wordsworth says that after

"With God and Nature communing, removed
From little enmities and low desires,"

he is filled with "a more than Roman confidence in mankind."

Yet great though the reward, perhaps the burden our Prophets and Poets have sought to impose is too great. They would have us accept responsibility for ourselves, "*know* ourselves." No wonder, perhaps, that the bulk of mankind prefers to make scapegoats of its gods; load them with human sins; then sacrifice and eat that life might flow more abundantly.

There is a great need for a more spiritual and selfless conception of God,

> "A Being that is spread
> O'er all that moves and all that seemeth still,
> O'er all that, list beyond the reach of thought
> And human knowledge, to the human eye
> Invisible, yet liveth to the heart."

It is surely worth while, in any epoch or in any stage of a man's life, to feel with Browning:

> "A man's reach should exceed his grasp.
> Or what's a heaven for?"

though we cannot strive or stretch unless we are *assured* there is something ultimately to be obtained. *Faith* is essential.

Wordsworth expresses Browning's thought in these words:

> "to aspire
> With faculties still growing, feeling still
> That whatsoever point they gain, they yet
> Have something to pursue."

Is it not the desire to grow, to develop further and further towards perfection, to know the Unattainable Beauty, that is the germ of all deep, religious feeling?

D. R. W. CARR.

The recently-enacted Ohio Poetry Day bill reads "Be it resolved by the General Assembly of the State of Ohio: that the third Friday in October of each year shall be set apart as Ohio poetry day, to honour and give special recognition to the poets of Ohio. This day shall be the occasion for the special observance and study of poetry in the public schools of the state in such manner as may be prescribed by the superintendent of public instruction."

WARNING TO MUSE

MUSE depart
You will not find
A barren garden
To your mind.

Like fountain spray
In the sun-light
My verse once danced
For your delight.

O! turn your head,
Before my reeds
Singing and brave,
Have turned to weeds.

Lest you should weep
Your child's disgrace,
Muse, in pity
Hide your face.

MARGARET SACKVILLE.

L'INFINITO

(After Leopardi)

EVER was dear to me this lonely height,
This hedge that, stretching far on either side,
Shuts off so much horizon from my sight
Where I sit watching, wondering—and wide
Spaces on either hand, deep quietude
Of supernatural profundity
Imagine; so that by degrees my mood
To terror turns, and hearing suddenly
The wind ride storming through the trees, compare
That quiet to this strong voice; remembering
Eternity and how dead times prepare
The living present and its thundering.
In which immensity my thought is drowned,
And sweet the shipwreck in this sea profound.

T. WESTON RAMSEY.

MODERN PORTUGUESE POETRY

IT is extremely difficult to specify what we mean by "modern" poetry. Perhaps, in England, we have some vague idea of poets whose main form is free verse and who use an apparently disconnected imagery. But neither free verse nor disconnected imagery were entirely unknown in the literature of the past, and their present popularity is rather symptomatic than causal.

It would be truer to say that modern urban life, the inventions of science amongst which we townsmen live, have created a new kind of mentality. This mentality is largely acerbated and nervous. It lacks classic objectiveness and romantic fire. It aspires towards the beautiful, perhaps, but it is constantly obsessed by the ugly.

Modern Portuguese poetry has a greater coherence and even metricality than our own. This is, possibly, due to the smallness of Lisbon and other towns in Portugal, and freedom from any of the grosser forms of modern urbanization. But one defect stops the poets from enjoying their advantage to the full; the great failing of the Portuguese is vanity, and their eyes are turned inwards nearly always. Or, to put it more coldly, their poetry is thoroughly "introverted," according to the classification of Dr. Jung.

Perhaps this congenital tendency was even exaggerated by the beginnings of modern Portuguese poetry. Its first exponent (who, besides, committed suicide at the age of twenty-six in 1916) was Mario de Sa-Carneiro. His imagery is restricted and consists in the "ivory towers," "Scotch lords," and "palaces" of his dream-world, which every now and again clash with some ugly or banal object from modern sophisticated existence.

> "Because it is so; my soul,
> That once could dream of the Russias,
> Has become soft with calm,
> And to-day dreams only of plushes."

The train of thought running through any of his poems is usually obscure to the reader, though a minute study of the author's psychological eccentricities might discover the clue. With all this, he was a sufficiently imposing poet to influence those who came after him very strongly. He

lived in Paris most of the time, and was almost certainly very influenced by the Symbolists and others. A collection of his poems was published last year (1937) under the title of *Indicios de Oiro*.

Another member of the same group, Fernando Pessoa, the greatest poet of twentieth-century Portugal, is, on the other hand, almost always completely clear as to his meaning. He is, however, a curious case of impersonality in art. Much of his best work he wrote under false names, building up the personality of the new poet he had invented, piece by piece, very often sacrificing poetical perfection to this end. But the tone of self-exasperation is there in all his poems. Sometimes he speaks in the name of Alberto Caeiro, the pagan, who hated the interior of things and for whom a primrose by the water's brim really was and never could be anything else than a primrose.

> "I have the natural egoism of the flowers,
> And of the rivers going along on their way,
> Without knowing, preoccupied
> Without knowing it, preoccupied
> Only with flowering and with running on."

Sometimes we have Alvaro de Campos, the neurotic engineer who worships modern inventions, but is always divided in soul between them and the dream-life of his childhood.

> "Musical essence of my useless verses,
> Who will let me find you as a thing of my own creation,
> And not as a thing that always remained opposite the tobacconist's opposite,
> Putting on my shoes conscious of being alive,
> Like a carpet a drunkard trips on
> Or a basin the gipsies stole and which was worth nothing at all."

Or, again, we have Pessoa himself, in the wistful, patriotic poems of his book, "Mensagem." But, lying beneath them all is always the author's febrile discontentment.

> "Ages give place to ages
> In the time whilst ages come;
> But a man must have discontentment,
> For the blind forces are governed
> By the power that is in the soul."

Perhaps the less metaphysical side of this discontentment was due to Pessoa's monotonous life, working in offices in

Lisbon on commercial translations from the English. He had been educated in South Africa and knew English extraordinarily well. He even wrote many poems in a curious, complicated English of his own, but these have not the excellence of his Portuguese works. The latter are, however, strongly influenced by English poets, as was indeed the whole structure of the poet's mind. Alvaro de Campos is, with D. H. Lawrence, the most successful of all Walt Whitman's disciples. Pessoa died in 1935.

Another member of this earlier group of poets was Almada, whose philosophical poems remind one of catherine-wheels, spluttering fire faster and faster, more and more rhythmically; sometimes, also, of catherine-wheels that are not working quite as they should. But Almada's real work is as a prose-writer and as a painter, in both of which mediums he had accomplished work of the first importance.

About ten years ago, two future poets, José Regio and Adolfo Casais Monteiro, and a future novelist and critic, João Gaspar Simões, were students at Coimbra University. There they founded a literary review *Presença*, which they are still running to this day. They were aiming at founding a modern literature in Portugal, free from all extraneous interests of politics and religion, and acknowledging the three elder poets I have spoken of above, with some others, as the undoubted predecessors of their "modern" poetry. But, though they publish work by numerous other hands, *Presença* is, up to the present, mainly interesting as the organ of the three editors and those whom they have influenced.

José Regio is almost a traditional decadent poet. He is very fond of writing about angels and devils and "mother's little hopeful gone west." But he has a sarcastic note and a power of describing the reactions of people around him that partly saves him from this.

"The crowd
Stopped to see
This well-dressed gentleman,
With his good manners and respectable appearance,
Running away like a lost soul
From the surprise of everybody and a bit."

Generally, Regio uses the traditional forms and metres and is justified in doing so, though there are cases when he misuses them, saying one thing on the musical and another on the verbal side, as in the *Elegia Bufa*. Still, his book of poems *As Encruzilhadas de Deus* is an achievement, and he has already created a lurid dream-world to express his emotions in which he moves about with great ease.

Casais Monteiro is a poet of quite another sort. He generally writes in free verse and about his own incapacity for losing himself in poetic creation or any other emotion. The lines break and stutter, so as to express this state of mind, which they do very successfully. We find an absence of all but the most essential imagery and a concentration on the interior conflict which interests him, though, maybe, in his last book, *Sempre e sem Fim*, there are signs of something newer and more rhetorical and more metrical arising.

Three poets who have arisen since the founding of *Presença* deserve a few words.

Alberto de Serpa's lyrical and personal poetry has a more impersonal tone than that of most of the preceding poets. He is a master at describing little scenes from life in the streets, as in *Descripçao*, or the atmosphere of the night, with its moon, its wind, its silhouetted palm-trees, its romances, in *Vinte Poemas da Noite*. To read his small output, with its insistence on external reality, is a relief amongst so much of the internal gloom of probably superior poets.

Carlos Queiroz (*Desaparecido*—Antero de Quental Prize (1935)) is another young poet, of a more traditional frame of mind. He mixes a slight irony, of rather too naïve a quality, with a pleasantly tender and lyrical vein.

Miguel Torga has written poems which show the influence of Regio, but more austere and Biblical than the latter's, in *O Outro Livro de Job* (1936).

Apart from these young poets, more traditional writers such as Texeira de Pascoais and António Botto are still producing valuable poetical work.

CHARLES DAVID LEY.

SAPPHO

I

(*She speaks*)

WHY shall I wake from slumber, deep, secure,
From silence of the years to speak with you?
From sleep of ages, violet and blue,
Why shall I harken to a modern wooer?
Behold, Sappho am I, who shall endure
With Beauty for her self alone. Friend, do
The sea-girt hills of Eresos, still true,
Tell of it yet, *Beauty's investiture?*

What have years added in her praise, what note
Unsung by me on her immortal lyre?
Lifts there a song from a more golden throat,
More true in praise of Love and Love's desire
Than song of mine in days, dim and remote—
The scattered fragments from her quenchless fire?

II

(*He speaks*)

Thy sealed perfection from all else I choose,
And I invoke thee, Sappho, from thy sleep—
The drowning tides of time are not so deep
That they efface thine image, O tenth Muse,
Not all their storms can dim the magic hues
Of thy illuminations, that still keep
As captive minds of men, since from that steep
And cruel promontory thou didst leap.

Sappho, all hail, all hail, thou Deathless One,
More precious thou than gold, accept Time's crown!
For others like unto thee there are none—
And dreamt thou that such majesty could drown?
Not while veiled moons pursue the circling sun
Shall such a light as thine . . . go down.

III

(*She speaks*)

Love with his gift of pain gave me my song
And on mine eyes poured Death's kind anodyne:

The swift and dizzy plunge in purpling brine—
I would the aching thought of it prolong—
It was so pure, so lost, so passing strong,
Alone of Love and Love's command divine!
I knew at last that Love was wholly mine—
There was no choice, there was no right nor wrong.

There was no youth, no age, nor any place
That could be free of Love in any land,
Nor any heart—for this, then, was I born—
To give the lustful world Love's reprimand:
For I had seen at last Love's perfect face
In moon-hemmed gardens and the fields of morn—

IV

(*She Speaks*)

In sun-baked coves beside a tideless sea
Festooned with honeysuckle, lavender and thyme,
Samphire and rosemary, where tinkling chime
Of tiny torrents sounded clear, by tree
On tree ablaze with Beauty's banners, we
Beneath the azure sky would daily climb
The breathless height where hand in hand sublime
Truth spoke with us and whispered Love is free!

By night a million stars illumined our way
From the high vault of heaven, or the moon,
With magic, flooding all things, ray on ray,
O'erwhelmed us, and if the month were June
The nightingale sang her persuasive lay—
Through leafy glades—her love-indulgent tune.

V

(*He speaks*)

As are the tints of the Aegean dawn,
Defying every ancient artist's skill,
Defying every modern effort still—
Beyond transcription were thy measures born.
From the great Script of Beauty they were torn.

And none may touch her holy scripts at will.
Through many hours with desire a'thrill
He wins perchance but her reluctant scorn.

The temples and the porticoes are dust
Long since wherein thy gracious steps were led
And many songs forgotten, and the Just
And Unjust are but phantoms now, and dead
Are many millions who devoured a crust
And famished at last, starved for Beauty's bread.

VI

(*She speaks*)
Had I but lived when Alexander reigned,
Had I but known the days of Caesar's power—
I am reminded that I had my hour
And in regret is little to be gained.
Here in the breast of earth I have been chained,
Recipient of the sunlight and the shower,
And slept as sleeps each gracious summer flower
Until the cycle of her rest has waned.

Love is Life's sacrament and Love man's friend.
I shall return, I but await her call,
There is no break in living ; years but bend
To gather more of Beauty and the pall
That men call death—a pause and not an end—
Passes as summer's shadows rise and fall.

VII

(*He speaks*)
A respite asked from Death—the wise, the great—
No lesser voice than Solon's, but to learn
By heart thy song, contented then, in turn,
To die. *Sappho thou wert predestinate*,
Married with Beauty—thy years dedicate
Unto this worship, this, thy lot, to yearn
For her high columns where white candles burn,
And every act of Love is consecrate.

To fill her goblets to the shining rim
At mirthful feast until thy trembling frame
Languishing sank, hasting to meet each whim
As follows with the wind, faithful, each flame,
Thy measures beckon us through years now dim
And harbour thine imperishable fame.

VIII

(*She speaks*)
But One has walked on earth since I was there—
Yea, you will marvel that of Him I know—
How may this be, who died so long ago?
You doubt the truth of this; I met Him—where?
Ah in the limit of your thought you stare!
Behold, I know His sacrifice and woe,
His merciful intent to all below
And what high heaven called on Him to bear!

And if once more I walk the ways of men
With this—the Light, the Light of Him—you start—
It will not be with me as it was then—
And this, my message, for full soon we part
That each shall yet become His citizen,
For His—the foremost name on Beauty's chart!

ALICE HUNT BARTLETT.

PLUNDERED

I HAVE lost the path—I seek alone
Down the dim valleys of the commonplace,
My climbing foot is maimed against a stone
And the high hills I loved, denuded of their grace,
Bar my objective.
And, instead, your face
Comes between me and the still, cold stars
And my music falters to staccato bars.
You, most dear torment, beautiful and young,
You stole the melodies I might have sung.

JOYCE T. ROWE.

AN ALMOST FORGOTTEN SCOTTISH POET

THE well-trodden highways of literature can never be said at any time to have revealed all of their wonder and beauty, even to the most observant of student-travellers: new views and new aspects continually unfold to the vision, even if perchance we have gone over the same ground many times before. What then of those alluring side trails—away from the main high road, that wind and wind, one never knowing just what to expect round the bend. And to the pleasure of simply following such an unfrequented path, the delightful expectancy of finding hitherto-unknown treasures, and the never-to-be forgotten thrill consequent on making such discoveries—and you experience something akin to the feelings and the joy of the prospector on striking a vein of gold in the mountains. The works of Dunbar, that well-nigh forgotten Scottish poet, over whose grave the moss of four centuries has grown, may be said to afford such a trail.

William Dunbar, a native of East Lothian, was, as is generally conceded, a cadet of a noble family. Intended for the Church, he graduated at St. Andrews University in 1479, being probably then in his twentieth year. He entered the Franciscan Order of Monks, as a novice, and we learn from *The Visitation of St. Francis*, that he travelled as an itinerant friar, through Scotland and England, and even crossed to France. Abandoning the Franciscan Order, he continued to be a secular priest, and was included in several embassies, notably in the one sent to London to negotiate the marriage of James the Fourth with the Princess Margaret, the daughter of Henry the Seventh. He held a recognized place in the Royal Court of Scotland, probably acting as chaplain as well as poet. As Court Poet, he received a pension which was considerably increased before the Battle of Flodden 1513, but after that date, no further mention of him is to be found in the Treasurer's accounts.

Dunbar long had hopes of ecclesiastical preferment, but no bishopric ever fell to his lot, and his disappointment was

very keen. There is some uncertainty as to the date of his death, some authorities averring that he fell at Flodden, others giving the date as 1520, and some writers placing it as late as 1530.

Of the personal history of Dunbar, we have thus only a few facts, and of the date of his writings, and of their sequence, we know comparatively little. The poems themselves, some ninety in number, are varied in subject and interest, and naturally fall into two main classes—allegorical and occasional. The volume is a medley in which tenderness and vindictiveness, blistering satire and exuberant fancy meet. He has not wearied us with any lengthy poem. His inspiration and his personal animus find vent within moderate bounds, but they are constantly springing up at different points, and assuming different attitudes. At one time, he is a great moralist praising the golden mean; at another, he is extreme as Juvenal. Of a generally buoyant temperament, he appears like most satirists to have taken at times a view of the world in which the Epicurean gloom dominates the Epicurean gaiety. Compared with either his predecessors or his contemporaries, he is a master of both language and metre, nor does he confine himself to any one metrical form, but experiments successfully with many.

The most important of his religious and allegorical poems are *The Thistle and The Rose*, *The Merle and the Nightingale*, *The Golden Targe*, *Beauty and the Prisoner*, and *The Lament of the Makars*, which latter provides us with a catalogue of Scotland's poets. In these, his style is ornate, and his manner of treatment quite conventional. But in the occasional or more personal poems, in which he indulges his grim, satiric humour, his style is clear, direct and incisive, and there we approach the man himself. His numerous petitions to the King for preferment are best represented by *The Petition of the Gray Horse*. His satire found ample scope in the life of the city and the court of Edinburgh; and his own disappointment makes his attack on the abuses in the Church, the more stinging and violent. He was a man of an infinity of moods,

subject to quick change. The battle between flesh and spirit may be seen going on in his person, and though at times he gives himself up recklessly to the enjoyment of worldly pleasures, yet the prevailing note of his work is the vanity of life and the need to prepare for the life after death.

Alluding specifically to some of his leading poems. *The Thistle and The Rose* is an allegorical poem, written in honour of the marriage of James the Fourth of Scotland with Margaret Tudor, daughter of Henry the Seventh of England. To his flattery of the King, whom he represents under the character of the Lion, the Eagle, and the Thistle, the poet joins sound advice. *The Lament of the Makars* is one of the few great elegies in literature. Apart too from its poetic worth, the poem is of value on account of the list of poets or " makars " that Scotland had produced up to Dunbar's own time. Of some of these singers, we know no more than Dunbar tells us here, while of the work of others, only a part remains :

> " Clerk of Tranent eke he has ta'en,
> That made the adventures of Gawaine ;
> Sir Gilbert Hay ended has he :
> Timor mortis conturbat me.
> He has Blind Harry and Sandy Traill,
> Slain with his shower of mortal hail,
> Which Patrick Johnstoun might not flee :
> Timor mortis conturbat me."

The Visitation of St. Francis is chiefly of interest for Dunbar's biography, and is a satire on the Franciscan Friars. In *The Merle and the Nightingale*, the merle or blackbird represents earthly love, and the nightingale sings the praises of the love of God. *The Dance of the Seven Deadly Sins*, describes a procession of the sins personified before the Devil in Hell, and the conception is vigorously and at the same time humorously handled. The Devil having commanded the dance to begin, the seven deadly sins appear, and present a mummery (in imitation, it may be, of one of the miracle or clerk plays, as they were called in Scotland), with the newest gambols just imported from France.

"Many proud trumpour[1] with him tripped
Through scalding fire, aye as they skipped
They grinned with hideous groans."

Dunbar was a man of an infinity of moods. The shadow on human existence could not escape his saturnine humour: yet he was well disposed to be cheerful and even merry. For example, in his *No Treasure avails without Gladness*, we have:

"Be rich in patience, if thou in goods be poor;
Who lives merry, he lives mightily:
Without gladness avails no treasure."

Again take the following from *Best to be Blithe*:

"Of Worldes goods and great riches,
What fruit has man but merriness?
Though he this world had East and West,
All were poverty but gladness;
For to be blithe me thinks it best—
Who should for tinsel droop or die,
For thing that is but vanity,
Since to the life that ever does last
Here is but twinkling of an eye.
For to be blithe, me thinks it best."

Everywhere his poetry is resonant with versecraft, and is resplendent with countless gems of sparkling wit. A couplet glistens and one breathes the sharp air of the Northern Spring—"Yesterday," he says,

"The seasons soft and fair came in fresh as a peacock's fedir,
This day it stingeth like an addir."

Dunbar undoubtedly owed much to Chaucer: at the same time, he lacks the genial humanity, the width of view, and the inspiration of the English "makar"—Chaucer's dramatic talent found no counterpart among the many gifts of Dunbar who is one of the most self-centred of bards, always brooding over the good fortune of others, and the ill luck of William Dunbar. It would be more to the point to compare him with his greater descendant, Robert Burns—the Burns of satiric humour, who wrote *The Jolly Beggars* and *Tam O'Shanter*, but a Burns deficient in passion and pathos, who wrote not for the people but for the

[1] deceiver.

Court, and certainly not the best-beloved Burns, the Burns of the songs.

There is much in Dunbar to repel, but we have to make large allowance for a rude age, a dissolute court, and a Rabelaisian humour. He was truly Rabelaisian before Rabelais. Trifler, moralist, scolding and scalding satirist by turns, he was always a literary craftsman, and almost always a poet.

In the sonnet beginning :

> " What is this life but ane straucht way to deid,
> Whilk has a time to pass and nane to dwell."

there is something of satiety of a disappointed worldling, but in another :

> " Be merry, man, and tak not sare in mind
> The wavering of this wretched warld of sorrow."

we have a manlier temper. Assuredly cloud effects predominate in the picture of Dunbar's life and work : nevertheless the clouds are shot through with gleams of brightness and these are what we prefer to recall. William Dunbar will ever be remembered as one who in his day and generation—a rude, uncultured age at that—had no small share in keeping alight the fires of Scottish poetry.

JAMES KERR.

THE TREE

AROUND this tree a town has grown ;
Upon its leaves the grime of traffic lies,
And ever to the smoke-beclouded skies
The gauntness of its twisted boughs is thrown.
Yet when mild evening drops her pearlèd shawl,
When silence like a rolling sea-mist winds
Down the grey streets behind the window blinds,
And still dews fall—
Then round the gnarlèd tree tall grasses start,
The scent of waxen flowers by moon-bright lakes
Drifts through the peopled boughs, and wakes
The Spirit sleeping in the tree's great heart.

KATHLEEN ANDERSON.

FIVE EPIGRAMS by E. V. FLEMING

JUVENILE DECAY

We suffer from a choir of youthful songsters
Who moan in meaningless cacophony,
A puling band of drear world-weary youngsters
Stricken from birth with juvenile decay.

BURIED TALENT

There was one once, so Holy Writ avers,
Who hid his little talent in the ground.
And so to-day some poets could be found
In mud who bury theirs.

A JEZEBEL OF TO-DAY

Viewing those lovely lips, with lip-stick laden,
I murmur Shelley's line :
" I fear thy kisses, gentle maiden :
Thou needest not fear *mine* ! "

A BULL

A tale is told of an Irishman who said
" How old I am I don't exactly know.
But most men of my age would have been dead
A good few years ago."

CAIN AND ABEL

I sometimes think a vegetarian
May, ruminating at his frugal table
Upon the ancient tale of Cain and Abel,
Say, " Cain was not, perhaps, so bad a man.
The things, the only things, Cain ever slew,
Bar Abel, were the earth-fruits that he grew.
Did Abel rear his lambs as household-pets
And cherish them until at last they died,
(Bequeathing memories and fond regrets),
By sickness, or old age—or suicide ?
Against all argument I will declare
Abel, not Cain, was the first murderer ! "

THE 18——WAR MEMORIAL

A LONG forgotten war—
Just seven lines in the big history book,
A petty squabble,
Some tribesmen taught a lesson,
A forward step, a necessary evil.
Trifling the British loss ;
Their names inscribed upon this handsome cross :
Three hundred killed, perhaps eight hundred wounded.
There is no record of the tribesmen killed.
No cromlech stands in those far crag crowned passes,
No cairn is raised in the still mountain places ;
And bodies in hill torrents leave no traces.
Some call it progress ;
Two inches forward in the great advance,
Civilization with cannon,
Learning with the lance ;
And peace with pestilence.
These things must be.
Better lie hid in sightless memory.
We do not know the facts,
It was so long ago, why wax
Now sentimental.
You are young, you will grow old,
You will learn better than to scold
Your wisely wily elders—
Be quiet and draw the veil.
There are sufficient sins to wail
In your own age, refrain
From touching sores, rekindling pain.
For after all . . .

I'd like to show you things,
Ye, who clothe wrong with angel's wings.
Let those names speak—
Once more the bullets down the gorges shriek,
Stubborn, shock headed, Private Jones,
Into his wounds creep strange and monstrous flies.
Why did he join the Army, heaven knows,
And that Carnarvon girl with merry eyes.

Do you remember those mules
That died in a heap?
Do you remember that section
Surprised in their sleep?
Do you remember the hamlet with the poisoned well?
Where five men died of typhus. And the witch,
Who cursed us all to some snow-shuttered Himalayan hell.
Do you remember the trial of those three for desertion?
They were shot by five beautiful trees;
And birds flew out of the branches,
When the firing shattered the stillness
And echoed away down the breeze.
. . . The village that would not surrender—
The wattle walls like cliffs above the corpses,
The grass huts full of children, bloody fingered,
How those huts blazed, when we went on our way!
They will remember for a time, a moon, a day,
The swarthy, swearing sergeant
Bit by a cobra—
He had four daughters at some little school.
(It was the year, that Bosphorus won the Derby.)
. . . That ration train,
Lost in the dim morasses of the forest;
We lived a week on bread and unripe fruit.
(It was the year Marova swept the town).
Those four young sappers captured,
Whom we later found, lashed to the trees;
Nails in their ribs, and burned a charry brown
(It was the year carouches were the fashion).

But these things do not matter.
They do not matter now, they did not matter then
To pale prudes parasolled, and their too gentle gentlemen,
It's a fine life, the Army,
Prim people of Brummagem brag,
Ensigns aloft,
Prosperity follows the flag.
Men must fight.
Is not the map still hazy?

You with your crinolines, your maiden ferns,
Your velvet curtains, family silver urns,
Your sermons seasonable, journals respectable,
Unopened calf bound books, your tinkling songs . . .
Whipping the poor with twisted texts for thongs.
You sent your sons, your comfort cultured children,
To hunger, want, to pestilence, and plague.
You heard them curse, and cry, gesticulate and rave.
You made them murderers, cut-throats, tyrants, thugs,
You made them kill, and called the killers heroes,
Their lives were lost, and you the dancing Neros
You made man beast for your own black ascension;
Brisk with the ribbon, tardy with the pension.
And now the pit is full with history's dust.
The grass has grown, their children hide the loss;
With sacramental spade you build the cross
Symbol of life, and love, and man's allotment grief,
Always memorial of your disbelief.
Write down the names, there are not very many,
A handful killed, perhaps a few more wounded—
A line of graves beneath an Asian sky;
Some widow at her wash tub will stop awhile, and cry.
The regiment has new colours,
The band goes blaring by.
April is here again, my lads, and who's afraid to die?

DENNIS BIRCH.

[Note. No particular war is referred to in the above poem, but the reader will find it only too easy to discover its parallels in fact.]

Dealing with Contemporary Verses at a meeting of the Dollar Centre, the President, Mr. William Walker, referred to a characteristic of English poetry, love of nature. The bias of our outlook upon nature rests of course upon many influences but a recurrent similarity of outlook can be traced in the works of writers of distant times and in the Middle Age period and in Renaissance and in Modern days. The powerful influence of natural scenes upon man shows itself in one way to-day in the method adopted by some writers of verse. By brief phrases the outlines of a picture formed from recollected scenes may be stirred into being in the reader's mind. Verses of this order frequently lack rhyme, but rhythm and the urge which discovers men's hearts and quickens their minds are there to be enjoyed.

LAUS ANAESTHESIAE

NOT with your clarion, Angel;
Not with your thunder,
But with a gentler art bespeak them.

Time has foreclosed their grief,
And set them in this ante-room of Death,
This Porch of wonder;
Then wake them not.

Should they be broken on the sword,
Who would so stately die?
Should their white calm be scattered
To the long wind of your tocsin,
The terror of your trumpets?

Too terror-bright the clarion, the sword,
For this strange peace—
They are the implements of war,
Implicit in the battle.

But these have found release,
And lie en-isled,
And hear not even the murmur of the lake
That circles them,
So hushed are they.

Tune low your trumpets then,
Or bid your calm and passionless lutes
They yet more softly play,
And wake them not.

For, when that quiet call
Quickens across the water.
Soft but immutable—
Sleeping, they, too, will rise,
They, too, will answer, Azrael!
Instant as those in battle.

Then be content with their obedience,
And wake them not,
O Thou Sword-bright! Thou Inscrutable!

Capetown. GERTRUDE VALLANCE.

TOWARDS EMMAUS

" I will not remember."

THEY kept the road that wound Emmaus-ward
From out Jerusalem,
Remembering their Dying Lord—
And the Lord followed them.

Earth a grey and golden gown was wearing,
Patterned with fern and flower,
Evening was near her moon-bearing,
Close to the heavy hour.

But the pale time no future hour might borrow,
No miracle employ
To show that those bowed low with sorrow
Would soon bow low with joy.

The breeze uprising scattered far and wide
Sweet frankincense and myrrh
On sentries guarding, sword at side,
A cheated sepulchre.

All jubilant the moon ascending travelled
Then lingered loth to go,
The while were mysteries unravelled
Kings had desired to know. . . .

A most majestic questioning was His,
And a most tender one,
Part to enhance their coming bliss
And part to lead them on.

" What mutual theme of sorrow do you ponder,
And wherefore are you sad,
Why do you droop in grief and wonder
When all the heavens are glad ? "

" Art Thou a stranger in Jerusalem
Who such a question brings ?
And hast Thou touched the city's hem
Unknowing of these things ? "

He could remember how the sun was sent
  On its first mapless way,
Bearing God's flaming covenant,
  Cleaving the night and day.

Strata on strata He had piled the hills
  And bade the rivers leap
Over the cloven rocks in rills
  For watering of sheep.

Globular seaweeds hung in sunless caves
  Were classified and set
With lost beds of diverted waves—
  These He did not forget.

Scarce had Euphrates settled on a home
  Or drowsy Danube slept,
Ere Tiber waited for its Rome,
  And lo! Niagara leapt.

This He remembered, all things He remembered,—
  The fierce volcanic age
When peaceful mountain tops were embered
  With fires that roared their rage:

He could recall vast creatures breathing pride
  Inert in the slow Nile—
The brontosaurus shapes that dyed
  The uneventful mile.

And then the moment of Creation came
  When measured time began,
When the mind's lamp with its bare flame
  Was lit and held to man—

—The woman's Seed to crush the serpent's head—
  —Jehovah, half divined—
The Law bestowed—the Prophets dead—
  All these were in His mind.

But had so soon His own forgiveness healed
His feet, His hands, His side,
That one short day alone was sealed,
And that, the day He died?

The Master Who on fiery Olivet
Taught Love's longsufferings,
In His remembering, *could* forget;—
"What things?" He said, "*What things?*"

I. SUTHERLAND GROOM.

THE TRAMP ON THE ROAD

IT'S the tramp on the road
When the fire is black
And no money put by.
I'll lave the ould home
On an endless track
For that lonesome am I
Since the Angels they stole
In at morn ochone!
When herself lay asleep.
A few of them loitered,
Then left me alone
To weep.

For the tramp on the road
Was back o' my mind
When I worked for our bread,
This flow'r in my heart
I'll bear through the wind,
Only God overhead.
I'll trudge the green sod
By His moon-lamp fixed
Where no cloud Heav'n bars;
To be there if she chance
To peep down betwixt
The stars.

H. T. HUNT GRUBB.

Two poems by Terence Heywood :

I

MANY a shaking
Of friendly palm
Has gone to the making
Of my right arm.

Arm, be steady
And strong for your ends,
Arm made ready
By immortal friends !

Hand, be clever
In the task assigned,
Forgetting never
The love behind !

II

I AM resolved to bear no more reclusion
Within monastic walls of self-deceit
Where man is but a crudely cowled delusion,
A lone leaf in a backwater retreat
Keeping itself intact against the day
Of sinking and mud-burial, little thinking
That time shall scoop its quietness away,
Shoot it astream and leave nowhere for shrinking
From onward turbulences, spates and spites.

There may be bed and board, and bed and borders
Of cultivated flowers, provided rites,
Half-thankful duties, and for some disorders
Temporal balm ; but, God ! earth's joy's shut out,
And Spirit's radiance is not seen about.

At the request of the Keeper of the Manuscripts at the British Museum, Mr. Laurence Binyon, who was for many years Keeper of the Prints, has given a holograph copy of his poem, " For the Fallen." It is written in a fair hand, with few corrections. Part of the poem is written on the wall of the Museum.

HOMESICK

HERE upon the Cotswolds
There are old stone walls
With lines of stately beech trees
Where our boundary falls—
But over there in Hereford
You may walk for miles,
The boundaries are hedgerows
With here and there stone stiles.

Here upon the Cotswolds
Fields are dun and grey
But over there in Hereford
Warmly glows the clay,
And though I've borne transplanting
To this stony loam,
I find my thoughts returning
To Hereford, my home.

Here upon the Cotswolds
Life is very fair,
But on my lofty hill-top
I love to linger where
I can see the mountains
As the sunset pales,
That mark the bounds of Hereford
And the gate of Wales. LETTIE COLE.

DESERTED

NOW that you have withdrawn yourself from me,
My heart has lost whatever worth it had
And grown as still and desolate and sad
As some old city from whose quays the sea
Has shrunk and taken all prosperity.

Yes, as a busy seaport, rich and gay,
Is beggared when forsaken by the tide
Which gave it being, purpose, strength and pride,
And falls into stagnation and decay,
So I have fallen since you went away.

Denied the element wherein they throve,
My thoughts, like ships encompassed round with land,
Rot high and dry on ennui's boundless sand,
No longer free to spread their sails and rove
The wide enchanted oceans of your love.

And like some long-dead town whose carillon
Still tells the empty hours with ancient tunes
As sad as dirges over dreary dunes,
My heart, though it has died, still flutters on
And beats a requiem for gladness gone.

E. F. A. GEACH.

LOST LAND

I AM a stranger in an alien clime,
Seeking a kingdom lost,
An April land of springing flower and leaf
That has not known the touch of snow or frost,
And lies beyond the narrow bounds of time,
Beyond the dark of grief.

Within these vales I shall not find repose
Nor peace beneath these skies,
Yet in the glories of the world I see
Shadowed the wonder of that Paradise.
It is the dew upon the early rose,
The blossom burnished tree.

The April rainbow's many coloured gleam,
The green earth after rain,
The young wind flying in the sunlit grass
And the eternal love that lightens pain
Are glimpses of my long remembered dream
Mirrored within this glass.

So for a little time among these shades
Unresting I must roam,
A homeless pilgrim, till at evenclose
I come unto my goal, my waiting home,
And there the lovely rainbow never fades,
And there for ever flowers the immortal rose.

PAULINE HUTHWAITE.

A SCOT EXPLORES AMERICAN POETRY

IN 1650 there appeared an anonymous volume—*The Tenth Muse, Lately Sprung up in America;* or, *Several Poems, Compiled with great variety of wit and learning, full of delight.* . . . By a Gentlewoman in these parts." With all deference to this good lady it must be confessed that two centuries had to elapse e'er " the Tenth Muse " could speak with authentic voice. It is difficult to create, even in a new world; and many things must be created before the soil is rich enough to create poetry. Turn to Louis Untermeyer's massive anthology, *American Poetry from the beginning to Walt Whitman* (1932) and try to trace the growth of American self-expression. Not till near the close of the period do we find much promise of a new note. Too often was the Muse employed as " the crank of an opinion-mill." In the seventeenth century the opinions were theological, in the eighteenth century, republican but conservative; in the nineteenth century democratic, domestic and anti-slavery, flavoured by prevailing popular philosophies. Bryant, Longfellow and Whittier often wrote with the American scene as background and theme, but their verse (better than is often supposed) was much influenced by English poetry of the Romantic Movement. Lowell broke into the New England dialect and dialect poetry of the West (e.g. John Hay, Bret Harte) also enjoyed a vogue, but this vein was soon cheapened and worked out. 1855 saw the first edition of Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, greeted by Emerson as " the most extraordinary piece of wit and wisdom that America has yet contributed." It fell like a bomb on prim parlour tables adorned with the works of Mrs. Frances S. Osgood:

> " Your heart is a music-box, dearest!
> . . . . And there's one little tune it can play,
> That I fancy all others above—
> You learned it of Cupid one day—
> It begins with and ends with 'I love!'
> 'I love!' "
> It begins with and ends with 'I love!' "

Crude, pantheistic, rhetorical and exhibitionist at Whitman often was, he was certainly the herald of the new

American poetry in many of its phases. But the industrialism that was to make itself felt after the Civil War of 1861–5 was a new factor; and so was the rapid stirring of the "melting-pot," destined to mix alien racial materials with Anglo-Saxon stock. Stephen Vincent Benet, in his living epic of the Civil War, *John Brown's Body* (1928), shows other things were happening when most people seemed concerned with news from the Front:

"A new age curdles and boils in a hot steel cauldron
And pours itself into rails and wheels and fingers of steel,
Steel is being born like a white-hot rose
In the dark smoke-cradle of Pittsburg.
By Omaha
The valleys and gorges are white with the covered wagons
Moving out towards the West and the new, free land.
A dozen men
Charter a railroad to go all across the Plains
And link two seas with a whistling iron horse.
A whiskered doctor stubbornly tries to find
The causes of childbed-fever—and, doing so,
Will save more lives than all these war-months have spent,
And never inhabit a railway-station tomb.
A moth of a woman,
Shut in a garden, lives on scraps of eternity
With a dog, a procession of sunsets and certain poems
She scribbles on bits of paper. Such poems may be
Ice-crystals, rubies cracked with refracted light,
Or all vast death like a wide field in ten short lines.
She writes to the tough, aware-minded Higginson
'War feels to me like an oblique place'."

This "moth of a woman" was Emily Dickinson (1830–86). Few thought that she would outlive the obituary in the *Springfield Republican*. Her posthumous poetry has not merely survived but has abiding value, appreciated by an age that can see the point of "pungent epithets and profound condensations."

These qualities would make little appeal in the "Parvenu Period" that followed the Civil War. One would hardly expect to find her verses in collections of "Gems from the Female Poets of America"! Indeed, it is remarkable how she escaped the effusiveness and diffuseness then so characteristic of nearly all American writers. We are reminded of Blake in many of her poems:

Beauty and Truth

I died for beauty, but was scarce
Adjusted in the tomb,
When one who died for truth was lain
In an adjoining room.

He questioned softly why I failed?
"For beauty," I replied.
"And I for truth—the two are one;
We brethren are," he cried.

And so, as kinsmen met a night,
We talked between the rooms,
Until the moss had reached our lips
And covered up our names.

The Railway Train

I like to see it lap the miles,
And lick the valleys up,
And stop to feed itself at tanks;
And then, prodigious, step
Around a pile of mountains,
And supercilious, peer
In shanties by the sides of roads;
And then a quarry pare
To fit its sides and crawl between,
Complaining all the while
In horrid, hooting stanza;
Then chase itself down hill
And neigh like Boanerges;
Then, punctual as a star,
Step—docile and omnipotent—
At its own stable door.

About 1870 several other New Englanders were born, who developed some of Emily Dickinson's tendencies. They would agree that in poetry, as in prayer, "speech should be hard pruned and clean cut."

Consider the work of Edward Arlington Robinson (b. 1869). Here probing analysis takes the place of mere acceptance of current values and soul-searching criticism undermines the standardized ideals of Babbittry. The Puritan spirit in its shrewd realism emerges from the clouds of sentimental popular evangelicalism. Confronted with this psychological portrait painter, we are reminded of Crabbe—in whose honour Robinson wrote a sonnet.

There is his Richard Cory, "a gentleman from sole to crown, clean favoured and imperially slim . . . we thought that he was everything to make us wish that we were in his place." But the public was surprised to hear that "Richard Cory, one calm summer night, went home and put a bullet through his head." Then there is Miniver Cheevy, "sighing for what was not," the frustrated dreamer who felt he should have been born in an age of faith and chivalry; "Miniver thought and thought and thought about it . . . and coughed and called it fate, and kept on drinking." And who can forget

Bewick Finzer

"Time was when his half million drew
The breath of six per cent.;
But soon the worm of what-was-not
Fed hard on his content;
And something crumbled in his brain
When his half million went.

. . . Poor Finzer, with his dreams and schemes,
Fares hard now in the race,
With heart and eye that have a task
When he looks in the face
Of one who might so easily
Have been in Finzer's place.

He comes unfailing for the loan
We give and then forget;
He comes, and probably for years
Will be he coming yet—
Familiar as an old mistake,
And futile as regret."

The poetry of Robert Frost (b. 1875) has also a "soil-flavoured quality." *The Death of the Hired Man* could hardly have been written except by one who had personal knowledge of the sombre life of a New England farm. But Frost distinguished two types of realist—"the one who offers a good deal of dirt with his potato to show it is a real one; and the one who is satisfied with the potato brushed clean. I'm inclined to the second kind . . . the thing that art does for life is to clean it, to strip it to form."

Edgar Lee Masters, born of old Puritan and pioneering

stock in 1869, also writes of rural life—not of New England but of the Middle West. His *Spoon River Anthology* was a best seller in 1915. It is an astonishing collection of over 200 self-inscribed epitaphs in which the village dead are supposed to tell the truth about themselves. Grocery-store gossip, local politics and their own sordid meanness reveal the "folks" of a typical Mid-West community, all speaking in their own style. A. C. Ward in his *American Literature* 1880–1930 thinks that "*The Spoon River Anthology* seriously needs to be anthologized"; "the worst that can be said of Masters is that he does not recognize the value of ENOUGH in the good work of righteous indignation and sardonic protest. No one can believe that Spoon River had such an astounding proportion of unfortunates." Yet there is a heroic act in Lucinda Matlock who—after seventy years of wedlock, spinning, weaving and gardening—concludes:

> "At ninety-six I had lived enough, that is all,
> And passed to a sweet repose.
> What is this I hear of sorrow and weariness,
> Anger, discontent and drooping hopes?
> Degenerate sons and daughters,
> Life is too strong for you—
> It takes life to love life."

Louis Untermeyer remarks in his *Modern American Poetry*: "With *Spoon River Anthology* Masters arrived—and left. He went back to his first rhetorical style . . . dull echoes of Tennyson, imitations of Shelley, archaic paraphrases in the manner of Swinburne." Yet in *Petit the Poet* he deplored the bondage of artificial European modes:

> "Seeds in a dry pod, tick, tick, tick,
> . . . Triolets, villanelles, rondels, rondeaus.
> Ballades by the seers with the same old thought:
> The snows and the roses of yesterday are vanished.
> . . . Life around me here in the village:
> Tragedy, comedy, valor and truth,
> Courage, constancy, heroism, failure—
> All in the loom, and, oh, what patterns!
> Woodlands, meadows, streams and rivers—
> Blind to all of it all my life long.
> Triolets, villanelles, rondels, rondeaus,

Seeds, in a dry pod tick, tick, tick,
Tick, tick, tick, what little iambics,
While Homer and Whitman roared in the pines ! "

Amy Lowell (1874–1925) is remembered in England for her monumental life of Keats. But she is far from being an echo. Her sensual love of colour and beauty is qualified by an astringent quality. Puritan heredity brings out a flavour tartly " New England " Her poetry is exhilarating and energizing. Who can forget her picture of a typical " Colonial " church, of wood painted white, gleaming in the strong sunlight ?

" The sight of a white church above thin trees in a city square
Amazes my eyes as though it were the Parthenon.
Clear, reticent, superbly final,
With the pillars of its portico refined to a cautious elegance,
It dominates the weak trees,
And the shot of its spire
Is cool and candid
Rising into an unresisting sky . . ."[1]

Anyone in Old England who would catch the spirit of New England should read her *Lilacs*, with its haunting refrain:

" You are everywhere
You tapped the window when the preacher preached his sermon
You ran along the road beside the boy going to school
. . . You flaunted the fragrance of your blossoms
Through the wide doors of Custom Houses.
. . . Maine knows you,
Has for years and years ;
New Hampshire knows you,
And Massachusetts and Vermont.
. . . You are brighter than apples,
Sweeter than tulips,
. . . You are State Houses and Charters,
And the familiar treading of the foot on a road it knows.

Colour of lilac,
Heart-leaves of lilac all over New England,
Roots of lilac under all the soil of New England,
Lilac in me because I am New England.
Because my roots are in it,
Because my leaves are of it,
Because my flowers are for it . . ."

[1] *Meeting House Hill*—the rest of the poem has an irresistible sense of movement. It must be read to be experienced.

Some of the poems of Edna St. Vincent Millay (b. 1892) another New Englander, will surely live—particularly the intense, mystical *Renascence* (1912):

> " God, I can push the grass apart
> And lay my finger on Thy heart ! "

Compare with the infinities and immensities of this long poem the sharply defined idea that

> " Euclid alone
> Has looked on beauty bare. Fortunate they
> Who, though once only and then but far away,
> Have heard her massive sandal set on stone."

When we pass from New England to the Middle West we find overflowing energy, but a lack of that minimum of form which distinguishes poetry from rhetorical prose. What Walt Whitman was to the agrarian America of 1855, Carl Sandburg is to the industrial America of to-day.[1] Characteristically, Sandburg was of foreign extraction (Swedish). Politically he was a social democrat, looking at life from the world from the plain man's point of view. He could write most tenderly (as in *Cool Tombs*). But it was the brutal mechanistic world of everyday that impelled him to write with relentless energy. His very titles reveal the man—*Chicago Poems* (1916), *Smoke and Steel*, *Jazz Fantasia*, *To a Contemporary Bunkshooter* (an exposure of " red-hot Revivalism"):

Omaha

Red barns and red heifers spot the green grass circles around
Omaha—the farmers haul tanks of cream and wagon loads of cheese
Shale hogbacks across the river at Council Bluffs and Shanties
hang by an eyelash to the hill slants back around Omaha.
A span of steel ties up the king of Iowa and Nebraska across the
yellow, big-hoofed Missouri River.
Omah, the roughneck, feeds armies,
Eats and swears from a dirty face.
Omaha works to get the world a breakfast."

Rebecca West has remarked that " Sandburg's lines will not reveal their music . . . unless they are read with a

[1] " Sandburg's rhythms are (deliberately) *banjo* rhythms, whereas Whitman's were *tidal* rhythms ; and though the banjo is as representative of the Machine Age as the seas were of the Lincoln period, it is unlikely that the banjo will outlast the tides. . ." (A. C. Ward.)

Middle West accent . . . very much slower than English speech." This gives time for the variations in rhythm to disclose themselves. Sandburg's object was to re-establish the oral tradition of reading or "chanting" poetry. This ideal was literally carried out by Vachel Lindsay (b. 1879) who tramped through the Southern States as minstrel and missionary, on a crusade to unite Religion, Beauty, and Community. His affinity to the black race is immediately revealed in *A Negro Sermon: Simon Legree, General Booth enters Heaven* and:

The Congo

"Fat black bucks in a wine-barrel room
Barrel-house kings, with feet unstable,
Sagged and reeled and pounded on the table,
Pounded on the table,
Beat an empty barrel with the handle of a broom,
Hard as they were able,
Boom, boom, BOOM,
With a silk umbrella and the handle of a broom,
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, BOM.
THEN I had religion, THEN I had a vision.
I could not turn from their revel in derision.
THEN I SAW THE CONGO, CREEPING
THROUGH THE BLACK,
CUTTING THROUGH THE JUNGLE WITH A
GOLDEN TRACK.[1]

It would be impossible to give an adequate survey of modern American poetry within the limits of an article. I have not mentioned that sweet singer Sidney Lanier of Georgia, who passed through the travail of the Civil War and "Reconstruction" in the South. Bliss Carman, Joyce Kilmer, James Oppenheim, e. c. cummings (*sic*) and many more I have not touched on. But their work, may be appreciated by turning to Louis Untermeyer's *Modern American Poetry: A Critical Anthology*, (600 pp. 3rd ed. 1925). There are several poems in this excellent anthology which may appeal to British readers. In lighter vein, H. C. Bunner's *Shake, Mulleary and Go-ethe* (what their busts might suggest to an uneducated man); Eunice Tiet-

[1] I can never forget Professor Patrick Geddes' impressive reading of *The Congo*, with its weird refrain—"Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you."

jens' *Drug Clerk;* Alfred Kreymberg's *Advertisement* and S. V. Benét's *Rain after a Vaudeville Show.*

I hope that these signposts may encourage people in this country to explore for themselves modern American poetry, following on the encouragement given by Mrs. Alice Hunt Bartlett's long continued *Dynamics* appreciating the contemporary output during almost twenty years.

A. L. DRUMMOND.

THE IMPORTUNATE HEART

ASK, ask, O Heart—
If to your clamouring pulse some speech be given,
If blood may beat in words and breath be driven
Of urgent transit to petition Heaven—
Ask, ask, O Heart,
Why bare brown fingers pluck the lowering sky
And sick with sweetness the late brambles lie
And like ghost-legions the cold mists troop by;
Why yellowing reeds in the numbed river mourn,
Twice-mirrored, their dim dissolution borne,
And naked cowers the willow, glooms the thorn.

Ask, ask, O Heart,
Why unto morning must this night ensue,
Why Autumn rains must gulp the Summer's dew
And joy to-day must wait to-morrow's rue!
Ask, ask, O Heart,
Why every mountain has its valley's deep
And every memory its sores that weep
And every altar its blood-debt to keep—
Why song is wed with sigh and health with pain,
Why every charnel has its ghost unlain
And every birth its pass to death again! . . .

I met the bearded Reaper, grim and tall—
His sickle cast in shadow on the wall—
So close, I shrank back on the huddled years—
And saw new meaning vomit from my fears. . . .

Ask, ask no more!
Shall we know morning, having passed no night—

Since against darkness only is there light—
Or Spring-song, having seen no Winter's blight?
Ask, ask no more!
Were there no grief, where then were ecstasy?
Were there no age, could youth such frolic be—
Or were there virtue but for vanity?
And shall that soul draw vital breath and brave
Who has not once looked down as to the grave
And deemed he saw Death's grisly ensigns wave?

Importunate Heart!—why count the battle's scars?
Thy dusk of doubt shall yet embrace the stars!

MARGUERITE JOHANSEN.

THE PICTURE OF A GIRL ON THE WALLS OF THE CRETAN LABYRINTH

ARIADNE, Ariadne, you are very fair,
With your lotus-jewel a-shining among your tumbled hair.
'Twas but a little while—as things by Time are planned—
Since you passed with your slaves along the Cretan sand,
Straining eyes, and eager-hearted for the first sign of some argo
Rising from the skylined ocean, while the dim smell of her cargo
Swung towards you with the sea-salt—spices, perfume for your tresses,
Screeching peacocks brought from Punt, apes of Sheba, and flounced dresses;
Gifts from every earthly kingdom for your mating with your lover.
Was he sun-king out of Egypt, prince of Tyre, or Dorian rover,
Who hunted with his chain-gang for slaves in Colchian seas,
Or sent his long ships huckstering in Cassiterides?
Did your children, and their children, pass the sun-gate in the west,
Wandering westward, wandering northward, to their last and longest rest,
Where the dolmen-folk made sacrifice on white cliffs of the main,
They whose emperors sleep dreamlessly in barrows on the plain?
Did your sons by long descent ride out armoured and unknown
With Alfred of the English or the Caesar Pendragon?
Have they sown their seed in Europe? Did they scour the sea with Drake
By the gulf where star-topped pyramids saw red-scarred skies awake?
Is it blood that by dim cousinship is yours and also mine
That crimsons all those flowers of death from earth's rim to the brine,
Where Flanders dunes are holy land on both sides of the line?

WALTER BURTON.

SPAN VERSE

SPAN VERSE is that form of verse in which the most intimate fusion of Sense and Sound is most effectively assured; for herein the Spans of Emotion and Thought on the one hand and the Feet of Sound on the other hand run "in step" with each other; the phases of Thought and the rhythms of Sound have their melodies harmonized.

So it becomes possible, for demonstration purposes, to print Span Verse in span-foot columns, without punctuation marks, whereby the learner, the student, the critic, and above all the lover of Poetry, will be the better able to judge of its purpose and its province in the "English Prosody" which the present generation of poets is now basing on actual performance, and which will inevitably (at long last) replace the Normanized-Latinized Prosody that has hitherto shackled the development of English Verse, and forced nine-tenths of it into the "hackney iambic coach" for conveyance of Poetry from Poet to Reader.

Free Verse exponents have demoded the hackney coach, and their raucous cries for "*Taxi!*" or "*Plane!*" have forced on public notice the crying need for modern vehicles of verse adequate to modern developments in social life; but the vehicles most favoured by the extremists are "too bumpy for words," and "too baffling for sense." Their vehicles are sprung, not on the compensating springs of a Dominant Rhythm, but on the unco-ordinated jerks of arhythmic coils.

The insurgences of Free Verse Movements, however, have now spent their force, though they have vindicated their cause; they have left the forces of Traditionalism shaken, but organized. Perhaps now, during the armistice that seems to be tacitly agreed upon, there may be opportunities for contributions towards a peace settlement, with early developments towards the making of the greatest expansion in our literature since the Age of Elizabeth—an expansion which is heralded by the unusually good quality of verse that is *sometimes* to be seen in our magazines.

But the essential condition of any peace will be the restoration of the sovereignty of the Dominant Rhythm, which incidentally implies the restoration of discipline.

Any contribution towards this end is worthy of consideration; and Span Verse is one such.

Span Verse comes forth as a means to this end; though it is possible that a Poem in Span Verse may be an end in itself. But it is here proposed as a series of "Scales and Exercises" in the Science and Art of writing verse.

"Ye Gods! A Poet is born, not made!" "Possibly; but if he expresses his Inspiration in verse, he should learn how to *make* verse." "Was Shakespeare *taught* how to make verse?" "No!" He "picked up" his craftsmanship, which is immeasurably below the standard of his poetry, and his poetry would demonstrably have been better expressed if he had had proper training for his art. In his time such training was impossible; in our time it may become possible. There *is* a Science of Verse on which its Art is based; unfortunately our text-books are still mainly Latinized-Normanized-English Prosody, out of date; we need a modern "English Prosody,"[1] and teachers to teach it!

Span Verse is based on speech rhythms, but not necessarily on the very words; these naturally require rearrangement at times for "threading the beads" of the rhythms of verse. Speech stress and metrical stress always fall together on the *strokes*; and neither is allowed to fall on a *flick*, as is often done in "slack" verse, nowadays. A "line rhythm" may be a repetition of one foot throughout, or a pattern composed of one or more types of foot, as a Dominant Rhythm, to be followed throughout a poem or a section of it.

In Span Verse, *as a means of Discipline*, variations are discouraged; but in *Flexible Verse*, which is the End towards which Span Verse is a training, *variations* are inevitable.

If any fears arise that Span Verse may impede or shackle Inspiration, it should be remembered that nothing shackles Inspiration more disastrously than inadequate means of expression, also that Span Verse aims at improving and facilitating the means of expression possible to any poet.

[1] See my *Elements of English Verse* (Macmillan) as a contribution towards it. Also my articles in THE POETRY REVIEW, 1935–7.

Once the learner, like the musician, has become proficient in "fingering his scales and exercises," he will find that he can use his knowledge of technique with *unconscious* and untrammelled facility when under the influence of Inspiration. There is also the fear that ears which have been permanently dulled by the continuous rumble of the "hackney iambic coach" may be unable to appreciate, or too bored to hear, any of the five or six dozen "Line Rhythms" which can be made schemic in English Verse, to serve as a Pattern throughout a poem. The example which here follows is one of the Heptameron of poems I have made on this principle; I have not yet exhausted the series,—which I hope the rising generation of poets may attempt to do.

The Wings	are Throbbing	"Arise."
		(, —/, —, /, —)
A Church	like many	a Church
With *Death*	as often	a death
A bier	with sorrow	alurch
And grief	with strangle	of breath
A youth	an Airman	who crashed
In pride	of daring	and skill
From clouds	of lightning	that flashed
To warn	or threaten	or kill
His kin	and comrades	around
My Son	my Pilot	is *dead*
And sound	and muffle	of sound
O'ercharge	the pressure	of dread
"*Ashes*	*to Ashes*"	again
And throats	are bursting	with moan
And hearts	with spasms	of pain
And heads	with boding	unknown
A *sound*	a sudden	release
For souls	in tension	fulfilled
A *Voice*	with bidding	of "Peace"
The rage	of tempest	has stilled
For ears	are lifting	above
And eyes	are ranging	the skies
And hearts	are thrilling	with love
As *Planes*	are throbbing	"ARISE."

W. H. STEPHENS.

MUD-WINTER

HERE, in the lane, Earth oozes up
Her ingots of bright clay,
And fretted ruts, deep as a cup
Have scored preventive way ;

The wasted willow-herb's dry stalks
Contend with Old Man's Beard
And the old wrinkled hawthorn talks
Of frost that may be feared ;

On the lean willow, kitten buds
Put out a timid paw,
And in the ditch, the swollen suds
Proclaim a sullen thaw ;

The team goes squelching, fetlock deep
Through guinea-yellow mire,
And steaming man and horses steep
In the receptive shire.

MARJORIE STUART BARROW.

SKIES

WIDENESS is a simple thing
That fills the childish eye ;
And height is that unequal space
Between his head and sky.

To lovers, wideness can decrease
To space from heart to heart ;
And height, to solitary night
That keeps the days apart.

To age, the only wideness stays
Within the waiting brain ;
And height becomes indifference
To sunny sky or rain.

KUNIGUNDE DUNCAN.

HOLDERLIN'S MISFORTUNE

THE prevailing tendency in criticism to-day appears to be to ask: what is the writer—or painter, or composer—trying to do? This gives a rather modern and sporting air to the whole business, the idea being that the unfortunate fellow is at least trying to do something—stand back and give him a chance! We, however, are not so much concerned with what poets are trying to do as with what they have done. And we have no hesitation in saying that Mr. David Gascoyne's latest book, *Hölderlin's Madness* (Dent, 5s. net), is a book which does far less than justice to the German original from which it is in part derived. This in a translation is an important point; any work of direct derivation, whether it calls itself translation, or "free adaptation," as Mr. Gascoyne calls this, should be a fair representation of the original, showing the minimum of distortion and the maximum of spiritual identity with its original. We shall consider this aspect of the book, and not the debatable value of Mr. Gascoyne's peculiarly incisive poetry.

Hölderlin was a true poet, differing from some other poets in that his degree of lunacy reached an unusually high level during the latter part of his life. But he was primarily a poet, comparable certainly to the Italian, Leopardi—from whom he differs in this, that his pessimism is cosmic where Leopardi's was more personal—and his poetry is more important than his madness. He wrote many rhymed poems of classical form ten or more verses long, filled with music and good sense. Mr. Gascoyne gives us, with two exceptions, a book of incoherent fragments, which do little credit to the genius from whom they purport to derive.

The two exceptions are *Patmos* and *The Half of Life*. *Patmos* is quite close to the original; but why cease at "Gegangen mit dem Sohne des Höchstens"? The best of the poem is yet to come.

The translation of *Hälfte des Lebens* is fairly good. But the word "Küssen," in connection with the swans, loses most of its force of imagery when translated "love." The phrase "trunken von Küssen" is definite; the phrase

" love-intoxicated " is meandering, and drops the precision which is poetry's first task. Moreover, we thought every modern poet knew that " wondrous " is a word to be avoided like the plague it is. " Hold " in German means graceful or lovely. It does not mean wondrous.

If this book is unfair to Hölderlin, which it is—the Diotima fragment might almost be classified as a major crime—let us be more honourable in our treatment of him and reproduce one of his shortest and truest poems, in which sweetness and depth conspire to make notable even the roses' thread-bare theme :

AN EINE ROSE

Ewig trägt im Mutterschosse
Süsse Königin der Flur,
Dich und mich die stille, grosse
Allbelebende Natur !
Röschen, unser Schmuck veraltet,
Stürm' entblättern dich und mich,
Doch der ew'ge Keim entfaltet
Stets zu neuer Blüthe sich !

That is Hölderlin's sanity—more interesting, at least to one reviewer, than any translator's exaggeration of his madness.

T. WESTON RAMSEY.

WHILE READING SHAKESPEARE'S SONNETS

I THOUGHT then of the frailty of all strongholds
That beauty builds herself in time and space ;
The gift to children and to children's children
Of the blurred echo, the resembling face ;
How I should mourn seeing through other features
And strangers' looks your youth's bright image stray,
Humble, remote as violin softly weaving
Background for talk round fire at close of day.

How if the red mouth of a grandchild's daughter
Should keep, long afterwards, your beckoned smile,
As hedge does snow—should gather and preserve you
Past memory's limit for a little while—
There in her face your face would be like music
Turned low left playing to a room that's empty.

N. K. CRUICKSHANK.

DYNAMICS OF AMERICAN POETRY: LXXIV

IN the brevity of these poems, and the brevity of the lines in *Out With the Tide*, by Lucie Karmé Gillett (Dorrance & Co.), there is a distinctly oriental suggestion. Miss Gillett tells us she writes because poetry is a part of her and believes that poetry cannot be defined. "When I found, five years or so back, that I was given inspiration to write I set a time to meditate or, you might say, to keep my mind receptive to whatever thought I have. When a poem comes, I hold it within my mind until it is perfected. . . . When people have lived deeply enough and have risen to spiritual heights, they will find poetry."

The short lyrics in this volume have no titles. We give three of these artistic poems.

I love you
Beyond comparing
With any earthly
Beauty
I have known—
For I love you
And—
I have trod the skirts
Of heaven
Cupped blue
Of the sky
And drunk
And—
Through ethereal
Mist
I move—

With the height
Of my desire
When standing
On the hilltop
Of my soul!

Of peace and quiet
Until
My heart was full
And cried!

But my feet drag
With the weight
Of earth.

A volume of lyrics of over 250 pages entitled *Beauty Signature of God* (1935), and a volume of sonnets of over 350 pages entitled *As From a Minaret* (1936), bring marked evidence that to Evelyn Watson the writing of poetry is as essential as breathing. Being seriously physically handicapped in sight and hearing is no barrier to the expression of the mental energy of this poet.

From the Foreword of Miss Watson's book of sonnets, we quote from a letter of Prof. Lockwood, University of Arizona, Tucson:

> "Shut away as you now are from the fair scenes and rich sounds of earth, which yielded their full joy to eye and ear in your childhood and youth, you seem to issue these songs as from a 'glorious privacy of light' into which you have retired."

The high level of these sonnets in *As From a Minaret* is striking. So vivid and vitally alive is the work of Miss Watson, it is difficult to realize her handicaps. Her faith is a living force within her, as found in "An Abiding Fellowship":

> There is a fellowship that's so serene
> It sets the fever of the day to flight,

As lovely as the starlit blues of night,
As beautiful as orchards set between
A quiet brook and meadows gently green,
As mellow as the flush of soft moonlight
Upon a rose all tenderly in white,
The good can show the beauty love can mean.

It brings to us a sense of deep repose,
And yet a strength to meet the trials of day.
It soothes away all troubles such as those
Which come to men along life's tired highway;
The Christly fellowship that spirit knows
Abides in Him, and cannot pass away.

In 1925 Earl Marlatt was awarded the Golden Flower at the May Day Poetry Tournament in Boston, for his poem "May Morning"—an award won in other years by Katherine Lee Bates, Robert Frost, Joseph Auslander, Robert Hillyer, Archibald MacLeish, and Robert P. Tristram Coffin. Teacher, Officer in the United States Army, journalist, and a clergyman, in preparation for his present work as Professor of Philosophy of Literature at Boston University School of Theology, *Cathedral* (Harpers) is Dr. Marlett's first published collection of poems.

In the poetry of Earl Marlett, we find a deeply religious vein of poetic appreciation, as in "Cloistered":

There is a song in silence
That sound could never sing.
There is a light in darkness
That suns could never bring.
There is a love in loneliness,
That baffles ecstasy.
Call me, Beloved. I shall not come.
I go . . . to Calvary.

and "Deep Music":

Deepen my music, O Lord!
Strike my heart like a lyre.
Quicken its strings till they throb
In a chord
With all things that aspire.
Tune me with mountains and stars
Pulsing farther and higher.
Deepen my music, O Lord!
Deepen my music, O Lord!

We find in this gifted collection of lyrics only a few sonnets. They are excellent enough to wish that there were more,—"The Valiant":

Look not for happiness in Avalon,
Where ghostly fighters languish in repose,
But rather stay the sun at Ajalon
For lengthened battles with remaining foes.
They, too, will yield, as others have, to faith
In you, your vision, and your marching-hymns,
Your fortitude which faced and laid the wraith
Of failure in the value of Anakims.

What does it matter if the Promised Land
Still lies ahead with templed towers unbuilt;
The wilderness is passed; the desert sand
Is one with Pharaoh's son and Achan's guilt.
The grapes are good. The vineyard will be won
By deeds like yours this side of Avalon.

In *This Fierce Heart*, by James Ramp (Marvin Cloyd, San Francisco), some forty lyrics and sonnets bring to the reader romance and the true singer's gift. Delightful is the following sonnet:

I shall return because the nightingales
Return to strew their silver down the dark.
There must be hearts to heed their crystal tales,
Lips tremulous their loveliness to mark.
Magnolias upon blue dusk will float:
There must be hands to draw their fragrance down;
There must be voices keyed to evening note,
Feet to explore night's star-enchanted town.

The scents and sounds of life, the light and shade
Must never lack a tender audience:
Beauty was made for man and man is made
Immortal by his mortal reverence.
I shall return. Eternity's wide vales
Know not the glory of the nightingales.

And a lyric which sings itself into the memory is:

Beloved, when I see the precious wine
Of youth's mad madrigals carelessly spilled,
And no grape growing on the withered vine
Wherewith the cup of old age may be filled:

I am persuaded that we hold our days too dearly.
Passion is brief, so why should life be long?
The songs of love would echo much more clearly
If each mad singer perished with his song!

In the midst of so much concern on the part of the poets for the welfare of America, politically, ethically, etc., etc., it is refreshing to meet a natural singer and Ramp is one from California.

With the pleasing title of *Songs Against the Dark*, the Driftwind Press of Vermont presents Jeanette Slocomb Edwards' first volume of poems. This writer's work has received wide publication in poetry magazines and the newspapers, which proves an excellent way to become known, and is the winner of a number of poetry prizes.

" Chrysalis," the first short lyric in this collection, follows :

> The flowers hidden
> In winter-twig only sleep,
> The bulb in the soil.
> Dreams, curled in dreary hearts, can
> Blossom as incredibly.

Many such colourful short lyrics suggest the Chinese influence. " Star-lit Hours " is of this genre :

> Forever
> I shall wear
> The memory
> Of star-lit hours,
> Like a slender chain
> About my throat.
> I will wear them proudly,
> As a queen wears jewels :
> Memories
> Of purple nights
> Strung on a thread
> Of starlight.

" Crystal Web " illustrates the ease with which Miss Edwards moves from the lyric to the exacting sonnet form :

> There is a quietude in fallen leaves
> When maple boughs lift to a pewter sky.
> The frosty twig and snowy patterns lie
> On bended pine where winter-calm reweaves
> Of cadenced brook, blue rill and cedar-plume
> A crystal web. The mobile flakes of white
> Are gleaming shuttles in a silver loom,
> Enmeshed in ivory and lazulite.
>
> There is a peace upon the mantled hill
> When mottled shadows brim the afterglow
> And valleys curve beneath a weight of snow,
> A grateful hush within the laden-chill.
> When earth in reverie is folded deep,
> Lay all your cares, with covered loam, to sleep.

In this generously illustrated collection we find a natural singer.

ALICE HUNT BARTLETT.

From These Roots by Mary Colum (Cape, 10s. 6d.) is as profound a study of "The Ideas that have made Modern Literature" as the title suggests. Mrs. Colum points out how great a force Lessing and Herder were in turning the tide of European Literature into freer channels and how the broad principles laid down in Wordsworth's *Preface*, that poetry should, as far as possible, be a selection of the language really used by men, have lasted to the present day. All the great critics are discussed—Mme. de Staël, Sainte-Beuve, Goethe, Tami, Poe, Coleridge, Balzac, etc., and stress laid upon the conclusion that much of the so-called modern innovation in writing had its beginnings in the nineteenth century when the natural sciences and psychology were beginning to hold the attention of mankind. Her own criticism of men like Whitman and James Joyce are analytical and comprehensive, for she has a grasp of her subject that is both scholarly and imaginative. The book is an important reflection on the forces always at work destroying and rebuilding literary progress and development. Of the critics' share in these forces she says: "Apart from disentangling what each critic's special original contribution was, it is difficult, and, I am inclined to believe, impossible, to formulate with precision the literary discoveries of the great critics, for what they contributed was not so much a systematic philosophy of literature as a ferment of ideas."

Stuart Chase, in his *Tyranny of Words* (Methuen, 10s. 6d.) is concerned with words more than ideas. Words! words! words! the despair or the glory of the writer! They defeat those who, like Mr. Chase, would tie them down to an exactitude of meaning. Even the lawyers have only managed this by inventing a jargon of their own. He finds them fallible things for precise expression when speaking from the political platform. He would like a science to fix them to an exact meaning, but even if this were done surely the word that meant one thing on paper could have other shades of meaning given by the orator's facial expression—tone of voice? "Brutus is an *honourable* man." But for the man of literature it is this very quality of flexibility that makes words the medium of his genius. The poet finds a glory in words that can be bent to his purpose and charged with a variety of subtle suggestions by accrued associations, context, rhythm, and the whole art of verse-writing. But while protesting against the waywardness of words, Mr. Chase covers much ground of history, literature, and general trends of thought, making interesting discoveries and vigorous and original suggestions.

Messrs. Methuen have just published, under the title *English Poetry: an Unfinished History*, the book on which that fine artist, John Drinkwater, was engaged when he died last year. It is a book to buy, for it can be turned to again and again. St. John Ervine in his preface says with truth: "How excellent a book this is. . . . I doubt if any discerning reader will lay it down without feeling his knowledge and understanding of English Poetry sensibly increased."

It ends tantalisingly. Writing about Donne, Drinkwater said: "No one could reasonably place him with the very greatest poets in the language, but he has strong claims to be reckoned among the most original. He wrote like nobody else in his time, and nobody has written like him since, or ever will. And the secret, so far as I can discover it, is that his thought . . ." Death forbade the revelation.

Mr. J. Howard Whitehouse, Warden of Bembridge School, adds a book of verse to his already varied list, which includes writings on Ruskin and literary matters, educational and social problems, and a Nativity Play. The verses in *Youth and Other Poems* (O.U.P., 2s.) are written with simplicity and great sincerity. These stanzas from "Death and Life," written of the trenches, would seem to have a vital message for to-day as well:

But peace will come to the earth again
And reveal the face of God.
It will come along the valleys
And across the mountain tops

Giving to summer its radiance,
To winter its strenuous delight.
But first it must come to the hearts of men
And kill the unbidden frost,

Building a barrierless home for the soul
To welcome the pilgrim of life
In the beauty of the lilies,
In the magic of the night.

A beautifully produced volume of poems, *Fantasy*, from the Welsh Outlook Press (3s. 6d.) contains some fanciful and charming lyrics by B. Myfanwy Haycock as well as her own illustrations. Besides charm her poem have music, and freshness of thought that perhaps runs deeper than her rather diffuse manner of expression at first suggests. This is how some trees in Cardiff have caught her imagination:

Clouds and winds and vanished stars are tangled 'midst their branches;
All the quiet, slender trees have lost their golden hoods,
Not a leaf is left to veil the rhythm of their beauty,
Beating in a city's heart the poetry of woods.

Those who, though they have, like Shakespeare, "small Latin and less Greek," would like to sip a little of the poetry of Greece and Rome, are recommended to get *The Olde Gods*, by Denis Turner, a neat little book that will slip easily into a pocket (or, perhaps, into a vanity-bag) and is obtainable for 2s., post-free, from the author, c/o Messrs. Bull and Sons, booksellers, 20 Victoria Road, Surbiton, Surrey. It

consists of about seventy brief passages from the Greek and Latin poets, and the quality of the renderings is attested by the fact that all have appeared in such publications as the *Glasgow Herald*, the *Cambridge Review*, and *The Spectator*. Etymologically the word "anthology" means "a selection of flowers," and the metaphor would be very fitting for this booklet.

Two Anthologies and a Handbook to Poetry

Fifty Years of Modern Verse. John Gawsworth (Martin Secker, 6s.).
The School Book of English Verse. Guy Boas (Macmillan, 5s.).
Poetry in Practice. Norman Callan (Lindsay Drummond Ltd., 3s. 6d.).

Mr. Gawsworth indicates that his aim is to draw attention to the work of some writers of the period covered by *The Oxford Book of Modern English Verse* but not represented there. Of his 110 poets only a dozen are also in the Oxford book. Now Mr. Yeats, though beyond debate at least a great minor poet, did not show himself to be an ideal editor. His defects were (*a*) inadequate acquaintance with the poetry of the period, (*b*) lack of a sense of proportion, and (*c*) inability to select, especially in the case of the most notable of the chosen poets, specimens of the poet at his best. Thus he ingenuously confesses that, till six months before he started his compilation, he had never heard of a certain poet who had enjoyed an established reputation for years, yet he gave to his discovery thrice the space he accorded to Hardy, Kipling and Masefield combined. Moreover, nobody could say that he selected poems which show those three at their greatest. And he actually gave nearly a quarter of the whole book to six or seven poets about whom the question whether they stand in the second or in the third rank of the poets of the period covered might be hotly disputed. Further, he entirely ignored such well recognized poets as Alfred Douglas, Noyes, Gorell and Humbert Wolfe.

Some of the ignored, it is true, are also absent from Mr. Gawsworth's anthology. But he blunts one of the critic's scalpels by declaring that "sixty good and a handful of great poets were listed for omission at the outset," on the ground that they are already "in every existing collection" which covers the last half-century. He claims to have examined nearly a thousand volumes in his attempt "to focus attention on a number of modern writers, Celtic as well as English, whose merits have tended to become obscured in an age when much verse has been produced for a comparatively small audience."

A third of the names of those represented will probably be entirely unknown to the ordinary reader of poetry. A net so widely cast might be expected to bring up some pearls. So many verse-writers have hit the mark just once in their lives. Pearls there are in Mr. Gawsworth's book, but they are unfortunately not too numerous. It is interesting to note that nearly a third of Mr. Gawsworth's poets are women. Incidentally, why does he give nothing of Ruth Pitter

later than 1924? Her 1926–35 poems won for her The Hawthornden Prize.

Mr. Guy Boas, who was formerly Senior English Master at St. Paul's School, has produced a handsome volume, ostensibly for schools. But it should have a very much wider general circulation, for it is one of the most satisfying anthologies ever made. It is a book of some 550 pages, and there are few pages on which the poetry-lover will not find an unfailing, never wearying favourite. Presumably, as a mark of catholicity, Mr. Boas has given one typical example of Spender, of Day Lewis and of Auden. It was, perhaps, a little unkind to place these three poems in company which so obviously dwarfs them.

Mr. Norman Callan gives his book the sub-title *A case for the progressive study of Poetry in schools*, but it is really a thoughtful and very interesting study of the technique of poetry-writing. Mr. Callan is widely read in ancient and modern literature and his illustrations range from the Book of Samuel, Sophocles, and Catullus to T. S. Eliot, and even that eccentric and unintentionally comic publication, *New Verse*. The book can be warmly recommended to readers of The Poetry Review, as well as to teachers of English. We have already introduced it to many school libraries.

Mr. Herbert Palmer and the Sitwells.

Questions that Mr. Herbert Palmer in his *Post Victorian Poetry* (Dent) —see p. 321—allows himself are :—

> Is there anything left save Modernism? And can any new poet get a hearing who does not admit himself of its ragged company?

Mr. Palmer does not answer those questions in so many words : his answer, in effect, is that there is nothing left save Modernism. In that answer is there not the implication involved that even a great poet is less himself than what his time and its fashion make him? That is a thing that I myself deny. No new poet *above a certain stature* may be able " to get a hearing who does not admit himself of *some* ragged company ; " but that is not to say that a great poet could not force a hearing. A great enough one would force one.

To proceed, however, with our quoting. Of all the Sitwells together there is :—

> The Sitwells have clung together like black-currants on the same twig, and though they have many strong points of difference they have mutually helped to create what is known as " Sitwellism "—which might also be termed " kaleidoscope verse," for they have produced by a lavish jostle of words something resembling that curious *changing* phenomenon caused by looking at bits of different coloured glass at the bottom of a tube (the kaleidoscope—a Victorian nursery toy), and moving it round and round.

Of Mr. Sacheverell Sitwell alone Mr. Palmer's summing-up is :—

He has no incisiveness, no continuous clarity; and in regard to his form, frequently hovers between uncertain blank verse and half-realized free verse or prose verse. For though he has a sensitive ear for the relative effects of consonants and vowels, his rhythmical sense is frequently quite out of touch with it. Frequently he gives one the impression of trying to write blank verse without being able to manage it, for contrary to all that his sister has written about him, he is a very indifferent technician, and the heavily brocaded and decorated garments with which he adorns the insufficient body of his thought and emotion are a muddle of ill-fitting curves and lapels, of topsy turvy twisted sleeves and leg-holes and misplaced waistbands. When he is technically good, it seems to be more by accident or sudden unexpected inspiration than through the aid of any clear knowledge of what he is doing.

Returning to the three Sitwells together Mr. Palmer writes :—

The Sitwells are poets of despair (and in this they are true Modernists), but their expression of it is often very masked and oblique, so that, save for the satires of Osbert Sitwell and a few outstanding other things, like Edith Sitwell's *Gold Coast Customs*, one is often more aware of a stage of immense frivolity or quasi-mythological indifference—a stage of gleeful dolls and cynical marionettes, of tumbling clowns and harlequins, of wooden horses bestridden by nursery knights, and the veiled figures of an aloof antiquity—than anything relevant to the near present.

Danish Support for Mr. Raw and Mr. MacRae.

(*To the Editor of* The Poetry Review.)

I most heartedly agree with Mr. Raw and the views he sets forth in his excellent letter, "The Twilight of the False Gods" in your January–February issue. Also with Mr. MacRae's comments in the issue of July-August, which I find highly interesting and to the point.

" Poetry is the highest of the arts and admittedly the greatest gift bestowed on man," says Mr. MacRae, and his unreserved statement and throughout manly and idealistic contribution has inspired me to write a poem.

But the greater the gift, the greater the responsibility, and one feels inclined to think, that the matter with many of the modern so-called poets is that they neither recognize the greatness of the former or the latter.

A diamond is a great gift. Yet when originally found by man it is uncut and rough and difficult to distinguish from an ordinary pebble.

A most delicate and laborious work in cutting and polishing the stone is necessary before even the finest reveals its hidden beauty, and

that cutting and polishing must follow certain laws and a minutely accurate ultimate form be given to the jewel, if it shall attain the highest possible splendour.

Now you may substitute the word " poetical idea " for " diamond " etc. and yet the facts will remain the same, and when reading many of the " nonsensical and ill-sounding verse " of ultra-modern poets one cannot help thinking, that the writer has shrunk from the labour of cutting and polishing his stone and with a fateful disregard of its possibilities has been content to present it uncut:

Provided it is not a mere pebble after all.

Yours faithfully,

ALFRED HOLM LAURSEN.

Ringkjøbing, (Denmark), July 8th, 1938.

DEBATABLE GROUND

I suggest, not for the first time, that there should be a recognized medium of verbal expression, not worthy perhaps to be called poetry, and not conforming to the nature of prose, yet possessing merit in its own right. A form rhythmical, and direct, and modern in its *informality*, and naturalness ; making no pretence to be poetry in the highest sense of that exacting word ; yet giving spontaneous poetic expression to some especially elevated or emotional or ecstatic mood.

Much of what is called Free Verse, ought, I think, to be re-classified, (since it is not verse at all) and grouped under this head—and just here I find myself at a loss for a name to give my foundling. Such a division of the sheep from the goats, of the tares from the wheat, of that which is *not* poetry from that which, having merit, is certainly not doggerel, would give Mercy a better chance to temper Justice ; and would give the goats and the tares, and the poetic might-have-beens " a local habitation and a *name*."

For example : by sudden memory or chance impressions inspired, with quick clarity of vision, and headlong directness, I set down my thought—my feeling, assured that the first words which come to mind are the *best* words to produce a desired effect. I cannot stop for rhyme in this case, (though the slow building of a " regular " sonnet is to me one of the most delightful experiences in life, albeit one of the most hazardous !).

The first words are the best. I write swiftly, unhesitatingly, choosing straight-forward, terse phrases, which yield as they flow, to an involuntary rhythm. The lines are measured, if not weighed. Poetically, they will, I know, be found wanting. Poetically and probably, they are beneath contempt. And yet—I keep at it ; hammer the thing into shape while it is white-hot ; toiling mightily for what R.L.S. called, " the mere wages of going on." Taking infinite pains, too, though as one without hope. Once done, I write a note to the Editor which says :

Please! kind Sir,
This is *not* Poetry, (as you and I well know,)
Nor is it Prose;
Yet it is Something—,

a hybrid, perhaps, of thought—emotion—imagination of a lesser order, expressed directly, ardently, and more or less rhythmically, in measured lines. It resembles the thing called Free Verse. Yet it is not verse. It belongs in a sort of intermediate zone, a bardic No-man's-Land—a border county, where feuds abound, where hard fighting and straight speaking are the rule, and impulsiveness is understood and allowed for.

Lacking polish, guiltless of rhyme, unmetred and unsung, it has at least qualities, "les qualités de ses défauts." Once understood that it makes *no poetic pretensions*, this form of expression should, I feel, be judged on a lower plane, with leniency.

One thing I irreverently know—it is great fun to write!

In summing up, may I say, that this kind of half-caste Prose-poetry—(not at all the right definition, yet used here for want of a better,) bears an art value and relation comparable, perhaps, to that which carefully arranged and executed amateur photography bears to portrait painting. No one can deny that much of such work is beautiful, interesting, faithful to fact, and striking in effect.

ELISE FELLOWS WHITE.

Skowhegan, Maine.

TO A CERTAIN POETRY REVIEWER RE LOVE'S INTERPRETER

Sir,—May I be allowed to state that the *title* of my book is *not* "Love's Interludes"? Love has no interludes, else were it never love.

Does not this unfamiliarity, or carelessness, regarding the *title* indicate that there may have been a corresponding unfamiliarity, or carelessness, with respect to the notice of the *book itself*?

There is a *doubt*, and therefore, being at the other side of the world and so at a disadvantage, I claim the benefit of it.

Will you therefore, please, allow me to draw your attention to some attributes of my work, at greater length than I would otherwise presume to do, both because they have been passed-over *unperceived* and because they are fundamentals of poetry.

I would not thus request the boon of so much space were it not that it may very well be that profitable discussion may ensue therefrom and a forum, as it were, be opened for the consideration of these matters, with benefit both to your readers and poets themselves; some, perhaps, such as myself, who wish to try the wings with which nature has endowed them and not borrow, much less hire, the wings of others, however highly soaring.

This may add scope and interest to your journal, were you to open columns to our views, however apparently heretical.

Open the lists and allow us to tilt at one another!

I therefore throw down my gauntlet in defence of my book and bind upon my arm the favour of the lady who graces its cover.

My opponent, your reviewer, first misnames my book, and then gallops past it in four lines, but it remains to be seen whether he has disposed of it, or whether it is now returning to smite him, hip and thigh.

He says that most of the book uses "colloquial phrase." I give it back in his teeth and say that, giving him the benefit of the doubt of reading it at all, he read it with his eyes alone; *he did not pronounce each word with his lips and tongue*, whether soundlessly or not. If he did not do so, then he is unhorsed already and the victory is mine.

Poetry must be read aloud, or at least every syllable articulated in the mouth. Any critic who does not adhere to this standard has no right to enter the lists as a knight, whatever may be said of camp-followers.

Now all these thrusts must be noted and accounted by the judges:

The first fundamental of poetry is *rhythm*, it is *not* metre. *Rhyme* is a trapping adopted in later ages and much overdone.

He that adopts rigidly, metre and pre-arranged pattern, snaps at a shadow, and drops the bone.

Is it rational to think that real inspiration can settle like a butterfly and find that its wings conform to pre-arranged pattern and metre? Who is he that can so control his soul?

The advocates of the clipping of those wings will have to fall back on the comfortable word "art,"—or should one say "artifice"? A poet, they say, is the medicine-man who can do this "doctoring";—but what of him who can write in vibrant rhythm, straight from inspiration, without any such "doctoring"?

To bolster up their case; to justify the worshipping of old idols forms, fetiches and dogmas, such curl the lip of scorn at the advocates of freer rhythms and even resort to the taunt that the latter are *unable* to use these appurtenances. That they are incompetent, heretics! Was ever bigotry taken further, even in the middle ages? Yet, catholicism and protestantism still have adherents. There are many other sects, and whole religions.

Let us therefore burn nobody at the stake, lest we ourselves be burnt.

How admirable were the Elizabethans, how marvellous Keats! But what of our predecessors? What of Greece, and of Rome? Has English poetry taken all that it can from Virgil, from Horace, from Ovid? Are there subleties there? Don't down me with metre alone. Are there no inflexions, no echoes, no transmutations of sound? In a boat race, did they not make the very oars sound, as well as the words? It was *rhythm* that won, not Oxford or Cambridge! And *metre* was last!

Let us therefore take some "colloquial phrase" (for such it is dubbed by my doughty opponent) from *Love's Interpreter* and *see*

if we find, here, now, to-day, in *English*, "transmutation of sound": that is to say, a rhythm, that reproduces the sound, or the event, that the words themselves describe.

It sounds a great deal to be included in "colloquial phrase." (The point in the joint of your armour?)

Page 35—

To Come

My heart is broken now—
What matters a bell
Tolling the death of the world,
Or blood and thunder to come?" } *Transmutation!*

Again, page 50—

Destiny

To-day is the gate of destiny;
To-morrow sing its praise;

A bell
Tolls in my heart the death of the world
Hitherto known. } *Transmutation!*

Please note that in the last line, in "hitherto," the tolling gets *slower;* the last final stroke, "known," being separated from all the others, thus ending the lamentation for the world.

In both these examples whilst reading the description with the lips and the tongue, the words that describe it are actually transmuted into the tolling of the bell.

Again, page 47—

Hurdle Race (second verse).

Imaginary sin is hurdle race
That many stride and fall, } *Transmutation.*
And winner takes the cup
Of imbecility;
The hurdle race of crowds—
From heaven through hell to heaven. } *Transmutation.*

In the second line both the stride and the fall can be heard, and in the final line, the take-off, the jump, and the landing.

Does all this merit no more than the comment "colloquial phrase," oh tilter?

And what of *echoes?* Does one expect echoes in "colloquial phrase"?

Did the Knight miss those echoes on page 38, in "Elusive Memories" and "Flowers"?

Let me quote—

Elusive Memories (last two verses)

Why wear a figleaf,
Hide the maggots in our mind?
Think we that the world is blind,
Its mind, opaque as ours,—
Deception's figleaf, rotted now,

Bequeaths us aught
But skeleton ?

Or, mental echos,
" Sackbuts, psalteries,"
Echoing the fact
Of carnal incarnation—
To those developed souls
Who cull elusive memories.

The more you read it the more echoes you will find !

Now, " fair my opponent," consider that these words were written almost straight off and not one has been altered from that moment till now. Nothing was thought out. Often one cannot write fast enough. Is there *nothing* to be said for inspiration, must the catholics burn us all at the stake of metre and pre-arranged pattern ? And what of— " Golden goblets hung in air by God " ? Which is the ending of " The Humming Bird " on page 78.

A true colloquialism ? And why should variations in the speed of reading, that lead to subtle inflexions and other effects, whether of drama, of pathos, or scorn, to name but a few, be contemptuously termed " colloquial phrase " ? Or was it a term of endearment, of approbation of style ?

Have I shorn the plume from your head ; is it blood that I see on your armour ?

These are not isolated examples. There are dozens and dozens of them.

And those three sonnets, those love-sonnets, with which the book begins, with lines of ten syllables ; can they be considered to be pierced by the lance, unhorsed, and rolling in the dust of " colloquial phrase " and of " prose-verse " ? Poor Dorothy !

Or was it because the first has seventeen lines, the second finishes with two lines of twelve syllables each, and the last line of the last a mere six syllables, and no rhyme in any of them, that they are unworthy of anyone's lance, and so were passed by in four lines ? The oblivion of silence for them.

The champions of settled forms, pre-arranged pattern, and of metre, do well to say nothing of the advantages of variations in the speed of reading, subtle inflexions and pauses, *the spear of the* FREE, for *they* are confined in their armour, with vizor and grieve, with slits for their eyes, and joints for their elbows and knees, however well polished, however incrusted in gold, the armour they wear may be.

Inflexions are subtleties, violets in leaves, and the galloping knight may well pass them by in the fire and the spurs of his mane.

Dismount for awhile, let's rest in the shade, sway a cool bough, and search for a violet or two :

We find, hiding behind " An Orphan," " The Better "—on page 18 :

Can I
Drink with thy eyes,
Or feed
With the spit of thy mouth?

Or reed
Pierce the brave heart of a lance?

Kiss with my lips,
Oh, know thou the better of love!

Gallop over it and you will crush it in the dust; fondle it, and it will kiss you. Is the passionate entreaty in the last lines *lost*?

But you cannot harm me, nor do I need your armour; as is made abundantly clear in the first two verses.

The effects of inflexion and of variation in speed are both to be found in these—

"He that hath is Greatheart;
To him is ever given
Wisdom;
But folly gave his heart away for love." *Page* 46.

"O God explore my heart,
Into Thy own." *Page* 34.

"Stay with me a moment, in my dreams"; *Page* 47.

"A kiss on white lips makes them red—
To me!" *Page* 81.

Why stab the enemy on the ground? There is hardly a page in the book that does not contain these fragrancies.

But I cannot close leaving this unsaid:

My Egyptian Poem has been dubbed "prose-verse" and so I ask, not in pride, but to *know*: can "prose-verse" be poetry?

Is *this* poetry? Page 97–98:

"A flower is its offering to God,
'Tis flower's love,
And so my love for flowers
Is flower's love's
Reciprocal.

. . . . .

That's the law of banking
Made by God,
Of human interchange.
To break it, we incur its penalties,
The payment of our debts
Innumerable,
To God, to man, ourselves,
Every living thing
And those we think are dead.

Our ignorance!
For nothing ever dies—
And this, again, is love.
Oh! why are we so dull
That only some of us can realize
Our immortality?"

This, and much more of like kind in the poem "Tyi" is dismissed by my "adversary" as an "*ambitious piece of prose-verse.*"

And I ask myself, is he a knight, or a camp-follower, and has he incurred no *penalty?*

Cochabamba, Bolivia. HAROLD ALLMAN-LEWIS.
August 5th, 1938.

PRESERVATION OF WORDSWORTH'S BIRTHPLACE

The National Trust have given their approval of the scheme that the Wordsworth National Memorial Committee, Cockermouth, should purchase Wordsworth House, where William Wordsworth was born, April 7th, 1770, and present it to the Nation as a National Monument. Not less than £2,000 will be needed for the purpose. Thus sum includes the estimated purchase price, and the cost of all necessary alterations. The house is now on offer for sale by private treaty. An opportunity of purchase is thus presented which may not occur again for many years. It is even possible that in the not distant future, the building might be purchased by an enterprising company, razed to the ground and the site used for lucrative purposes.

Known as Wordsworth House, the establishment stands in its own grounds off Main Street, Cockermouth, and is a small, many-windowed mansion which was built in 1745 by Joshua Lucock, the then Sheriff of Cumberland.

In order to provide for upkeep the house will be let to a suitable tenant with a condition that part of it, the gardens and the famous Terrace Walk be open to the public.

After six months extensive circulation of the appeal £1,200 has been raised by public subscription and small subscriptions are coming in steadily.

Three of our vice-presidents sign a public appeal—Sir Hugh Walpole, Dorothy Una Ratcliffe, The Hon. V. Sackville-West—pointing out: We are not pleading that Wordsworth House should be preserved as a rival to Dove Cottage in Grasmere, or in any sense as a museum, but we do feel that every lover of Wordsworth the world over would wish his birthplace to be preserved. We would like it to be possible, both now and in the future, for lovers of his poetry to visit his actual birthplace and catch from it some of the atmosphere of peace and beauty that inspired so much of his writings. We ask earnestly for contributions from anyone to whom Wordsworth has been a help and encouragement. The treasurer is the Rev. R. W. Crook, The Vicarage, Cockermouth, Cumberland.

THE POETS' FELLOWSHIP:

THE PREMIUM EDITOR'S REPORT

The awards are to I. Sutherland Groom (Bristol), Lettice Haffenden (Shermanbury, Sussex), Gertrude Vallance (Cape Town). In each case the poems concerned are short lyrics.

It is very good to welcome Miss Haffenden to the list of our winners. She has contributed one really beautiful sonnet, and a second one hardly inferior. Of Miss Sutherland Groom and Mrs. Vallance it is enough to say that each of these authors is maintaining her accustomed standard.

Especial mention must be made of the following amongst those "Highly Commended": Vera I. Arlett, T. E. Casson, "Cloudrider" and Margaret Ormiston.

Highly Commended.

Kathleen Anderson, Kingswood;
Vera I. Arlett, Worthing;
T. E. Casson, Ulverston;
"Cloudrider," Budapest;
Geoffrey Dobbs, London, W.C.;
O. C. Dougan, London, N.;
Reginald C. Eva, Hove;
G. M. Foster, Wellingborough;
Jessie B. Heard, Bristol;
Brian Price-Heywood, Formby;
Enid W. Monk, South Croydon;
Marsh O'Raffa, Exeter;
Redcliffe McKie, Hove;
Margaret Ormiston, London, S.W.;
Peri Schwartz, Roedean;
Janet Urquhart, Naples.

Commended.

Elizabeth F. Alden, Haddenham;
Victor Allan, Kimbolton;
Elizabeth Barrett, Seaford;
Langford Budville, Worthing;
N. K. Cruickshank, Stoke-by-Clare;
Mary Gordon, Kingston Hill, [S.W.;
R. G. Duff, Teignmouth;
A. Preston Hadwen, Hupeh, China;
Sophia Harbin, Yeovil;
Christine L. Henderson, Montreal;
W. D. Hinde, Manchester;
Gwenda Hollander, Edgbaston;
Pauline Huthwaite, Hawksworth;
Gordon Leclaire, Montreal;
A.F.M., Wexford;
Edith Mary Mann, Dovercourt;
Editha Melbourne, Maidstone;
Iërne Ormsby, Thurgoland;
Frances Paul, London, S.W.;
E. Curt Peters, Chalfont St. Giles;
T. Pittaway, Frome;
Margaret Helen Powell, London, W.;
E. H. Ray, Cardiff;
Jean Rendle, Whitchurch;
Helba Baker-Russell, Mougins, France;
Hilda M. Slade, Ramsgate;
Brenda F. Skene, London, W.;
Mabel K. Toovey, Amersham;
Phyllis Dulce Warwick, Newark.

The usual premium offer for the best poem or poems submitted to the Premium Editor during the month (without limitation of subject) is continued. Not more than four lyrics or one long poem should be submitted. MSS. should reach "The Premium Editor, The Poetry Review, 36 Russell Square, London, W.C.1," by October

1st, accompanied by stamped addressed envelope, and if criticism is desired, 2s. 6d. (For a more detailed postal criticism, 5s. should be sent.) It is essential that entrants to this competition be members of The Poetry Society or registered subscribers to THE POETRY REVIEW, and that each poem bears the name and address of the author.

The Chattanooga Writers' Club, Chattanooga, Tennessee, announces the annual Nature Poem contest, established by Mr. Robert Sparks Walker in memory of his wife, and called the Elberta Clark Walker Memorial Prize. A first prize of $20.00, second prize of $10.00, and three prizes of $5.00 each will be awarded for the five best nature poems submitted. Official certificates will accompany the prizes. The poem must be original and unpublished. It may be unrestricted in form or style, but must not exceed seventy-two lines. MSS. must be submitted anonymously, accompanied by a sealed envelope containing the name and address of the writer and identified by the title of the poem written on the outside of the envelope. The contest closes on November 1st, Awards will be made on January 1st, 1939. MSS. should be mailed to: Mrs. James A. Burrow, Chairman, 300 Glenwood Drive, Chattanooga, Tenn., U.S.A.

E. F. A. GEACH (Cardiff) indites LINES TO A RECALCITRANT MUSE:

And when I took my lute and bade her sing
The glory and the gladness of the Spring,
My Muse, who rules me with an iron rod,
Threw up despairing hands and cried—" Great God!
Who but the most presumptuous fool would ask
Me to attempt so impossible a task?
How, born so late, could any mortal mind,
No matter how inventive, hope to find
New thoughts and feelings on a subject sung
Incessantly in every key and tongue,
Mood, tense and measure, since the world was young;
And sung, what's more, by bards whose shoe-strings I
Am neither fit nor worthy to untie?
Sing of the Spring? Retell a wonder told
By better men a thousand times before?
As soon command me go discover gold
In ancient mines exhausted of their ore,
Or bring up water from an empty well
As sing when there is nothing left to tell!"
And since my Muse disdains to prompt my lute
And magnify the earth's rewakening,
I must perforce obey her and be mute,
And let the thrushes and the blackbirds sing
The songs I may not sing about the Spring.

V. S. STAFF, inspired by a meeting of the Dante Circle, has attempted to describe PAOLO AND FRANCESCA'S READING:

The haze of noon is quivering in the street,
There come faint steps—they might be Lancelot's feet
In drowsy quiet. Why does my heart beat?
Oh, read no more!

The painted letters swim before my eyes,
Great letters wreathed with flowers loverwise,
Whose pictured scents from oft-turned leaves still rise—
Oh, read no more!

(*Paolo reads*)

"Now on a day came Lancelot to the queen,
And in her chamber, of her maids unseen,
Smiling, he kissed where love's fond smile had been,"
Oh, read no more!

It was not long before the flashing knife
Darkened our eyes and thrust us forth from life,
And in the gloom of this strange, windswept strife
We read no more.

Oh, fair sweet earth! Our innocent flowered plain
A thousand years we shall not see again.
Old tales of silver rivers, whispering grain,
We'll read no more.

He who records our sin—does he not tire
Of his sad task, and in his prayers aspire
That the Divine One in his book desire
To read no more?

FACTORY WORKERS: Ethel Walter (Bradford) sends an answer to Joyce T. Rowe:

Listen.—We still have songs to sing,
Soft songs, wild whirring wheels would drown.
Shadowed by vast machines that frown
Uncowed our quiet songs we sing.
Half-heard, our thrill of music bring.
One paid primrose in a jar,
Thoughts of the blue-bell-misted ground
Dewed, though the dark walls make too far,
Muffles a space this battering sound.
Palely we see the sunlight still
Rainbow spilled oil, and set the dust to dance;
Unseen, we know the daffodil

Laughs at the Spring-we-feel-not's glance.
Thought inward turned makes turning—turning,
Wheels ever turning—rhythmic dance.
Rhythm scarce noted, so well known,
Rhyme of our songs—their dance.

Sooted panes on smoky mart,
Birdless, greenless, have no part
To hurt a laughter in the heart.
And our mirth is absolute—
Soulless these machines—and mute.
One dull rhyme is all they bring.
But we've a million songs to sing.

E. H. Wishaw, Whimple, Devon, apropos the Goethe celebrations, supplies a delightful version of "A Son of the Muses," from Goethe:

Through wood and meadow straying,
My little pipe a playing,
I wander here and there.
And keeping time with pleasure,
And swaying to my measure,
All things come forth to hear.

I scarce can wait the showers
That bring the first Spring flowers,
The first buds on the trees,
They greet my songs so gladly
And though comes winter sadly
My strains are still of these.

I sing them in wide spaces,
In snow and ice-bound places
Till winter blossoms fair.
When these blooms too are over,
New beauty I discover
On uplands tilled with care.

Then if 'neath lime-trees sporting
I find the young folk courting
I rouse them straight away—
The dull youth bolder waxes
The maiden shy relaxes
On hearing my sweet lay—

Winged feet to me ye've given,
O'er holt and hollow driven,
Your nursling far from home,—

Sweet Muses, shall I never
Have rest with you for ever,
At last, and cease to roam?

Two books by members calling for particular attention this month are *The Wooing of Ann Hathaway* by Grace Carlton (Mitre Press, 2s.) and *Lichens and Moss* by T. Pittaway (Mascot Press, 2s. 6d.). Mrs. Carlton's dramas are always distinguished by vigorous and convincing dialogue, for she writes in living idiom and gets the true atmosphere of her plays by characterization and incident rather than imitative language. Her construction of the speculative life of Shakespeare is a very satisfying one, for she presents Shakespeare as an impetuous man of noble and tender impulses, driven into days of despair and recklessness by the blow of little Hamlet's death and returning to the harbour of wife and home and ambition of re-building New Place in the end. Anne is not the shrew but the patient loyal wife.

Mr. Pittaway's new book of verse also establishes his dominant virtue, that of a religious sincerity and belief in the ultimate goodness of the Divine ruling. It is expressed in simple yet varied verse, which, if not always equal to the burden of its content, is so impregnated with the spirit of the writer that we are made unconscious of the ordinary jarring of technical defects. "Mystery" gives us Mr. Pittaway's attitude of mind:

I cannot say I understand
Life's full intent
And yet I trust the Mind that planned,
My welfare meant.

In mystic words the tale is writ,
Unknown the key;
The very flame that love has lit
I cannot see.

The greatest mystery is this—
That I should know
The gist of all my woe and bliss
No sum will show.

Arthur Hood writes: The death of the Rev. Dr. Allen Brockington leaves the sphere of poetry poorer in the loss of a mystical and beautiful soul. His books were not for the multitude, by reason that he framed his spiritual experiences in the simplest language, not disdaining the use of quite homely images and even employing what might be termed as slang.

In daily intercourse he was swifter than most to catch the humour of any matter, and all that approached to being sanctimonious he

would riddle with a fire of laughter and a noble scorn. Of his prose works I possess *John and the Spirit*, published 1907, (Samuel Bagster and Sons) and *Me and My Dad*, 1909 (Simpkin Marshall). Then the war came and he served as Chaplain in France until obliged after long service, to return with somewhat shattered health and with the sorrow of losing a beloved son. In 1921 *The Nazarean* appeared (Erskine Macdonald), *Common Epiphany* in 1923, *Fools Sojourning* in 1926 (Erskine Macdonald), and *The Face of Jesus*, 1931. In 1932 the Oxford University Press published his prose volume on *Browning and the Twentieth Century*, and from the S.P.C.K. in 1936 came a slender but lovely book, *The Death of Christ the King*. Other books may have been produced by him of which I have no knowledge, but these I possess, enriched by kindly inscriptions to me.

He possessed in an extraordinary degree the power of seeing and living in the character he wrote of. *In The Face of Jesus* there is an unforgetable picture of Joan of Arc (published in THE POETRY REVIEW), yet, at the same time, he could perceive in quite ordinary and even somewhat mean-minded, mean-living folk, the blazing mark of the Sonship of God. And he expressed this " soul-detecting " in a simple phraseology that some have failed to recognize as poetic. And, with all this living so near to God that he could praise, speak to, complain of or even grumble to, without a trace of irreverence or fear, but all in awe. He could look forward to seeing Charlie Chaplin's oddities with the delight of a boy, and would go miles to see a cricket match. His character of " Michael " in *Fool's Sojourning* is his own portrait; that was his name for me and in his letters to me he signed himself " Michael."

Our sympathy must go out to his widow, who nursed him with entire devotion for so long. Her happiness lies in the past, that she was favoured to be companion to so rare and fine a spirit.

The Rev. D. R. Fotheringham, Hon. Secretary of the Byron Society, reports: Those of us who persevered in the June " pilgrimage " had quite a good time in Switzerland after all. The Rhine had to be cut out; but I got to Chillon, and stood by the pillar in the dungeon, to which Bonivard was chained, and saw the name Byron carved in large capitals on the wall. The Byron Hotel has not been rebuilt yet after the fire, but the managers hope to reopen soon, with great improvements. I did my best to try and arrange a *Childe Harold Pilgrimage* for next year—if the rivalries of dictatorships and democracies allow. Most of our time was spent at Adelboden, about ten miles above Frutigen. There was a very jolly party arranged by an energetic Canon of Southwark Cathedral, and we joined it. Not much snow this year, except on the highest mountains. But the season was June, and the Alpine flowers were at their loveliest. We filled up the evenings with all sorts of games and competitions, among others a verse and limerick competition, in which our Byronians

were naturally expected to take part. I append the prize-winning effort on "The Alps":

Ye Hills, that lift aspiring heads to Heaven,
That reign o'er mortals diadem'd with snow!
Or shrouded with dark tempests thunder-riven,
Regard unmov'd Man's turbulence below!
O grant to us that pure Serene to know,
Where spirits dwell, that passionless and free
(Amid the ruin, havoc, and the woe
Of Man's rebellions) ever stedfast we
May still look upward, humbly, to Eternity.

The Poetry Society (Incorporated) gave a reception at the Forum Club, Grosvenor Place, London, S.W.1, on Wednesday, July 20th, to Mr. Harold E. Goad, the Director of the British Institute in Florence, in recognition of the most courteous services he had shown the Poetry Society's party on their Dante Pilgrimage to Florence, Ravenna and Rome in January and to further testify to the desirability and possibility of the development of cultural relations between the two countries based on their very great poetry, particularly exemplified by the two greatest of all poets—Shakespeare and Dante. The Rt. Hon. Lord Kennet presided over a very large company, which included Lord Horder, Sir Ronald Storrs, ex-Governor of Jerusalem and of Cyprus, Sir John Marshall, Mme. Assanti, Signor Paresce, of the Italian Embassy, Lady Hodder-Williams, Commander Carlyon Bellairs (ex-President) and a number of other Vice-Presidents of the Society and members of the Council. Apologies for non-attendance were received, owing to absence from town, from Lord Rennell of Rodd, one-time Ambassador in Rome, Lady Cynthia Asquith, Sir Paul Latham, M.P., Sir Arnold Wilson, M.P., editor of the *Nineteenth Century*, Sir Paul Dukes, Alfred Noyes, Sir Robert Vansittart, the Earl of Cromer, the Duchess of Hamilton, the Archbishop of York, Lord Wakefield, Viscount Duncannon, Mr. Geoffrey Shakespeare, M.P., the Earl of Sandwich, the Hon. Gilbert Coleridge and other Vice-Presidents of the Society, many of whom sent messages of cordial appreciation of Mr. Goad's services.

Lord Kennet, in a delightful introductory speech, said he was very much impressed by the international character of poetry; the dear Muse had no nationality, she was worshipped by all parties and all ranks here and in Italy, and was regarded by them as the embodiment of the spirit of unity and peace and the promoter of international harmony.

Mr. Goad said that what he had done was a service of love and the credit was really due to the British Institute in Florence. They were anxious to continue receiving such parties which had far greater influence than mere numbers might imply. He looked forward as the

author of *Franciscan Italy* to guide the Franciscan Pilgrims visiting Assisi in September and he could assure them of a warm welcome and the Podesta of Assisi had already voiced his desire to welcome the party. He proceeded to speak of the work of the British Institute in Florence and how through their students a knowledge and love of English literature, particularly poetry, was spreading in many directions.

It would be most suitable, a subsequent speaker suggested, if something could be done in London to promote the appreciation of Italian poetry. The Poetry Society itself had taken a definite step in this direction by the formation of a Dante Group who had just finished the reading of Dante's *Inferno* led by a profound student of English as well as Italian poetry, Mr. T. Weston Ramsey. Short speeches were also made by Commander Bellairs and Signor Sambucetti, the latter on behalf of the Friends of Italy. Sir Ronald Storrs and Signor Paresce had intended to speak but had to leave before an opportunity could be provided. The function was a particularly bright and enjoyable affair, greatly appreciated by the large company present.

The new Franciscan Pilgrimage will set out from London on Thursday, September 15th, travelling direct via Folkestone-Boulogne-Paris-Modane-Turin-Genoa-Pisa to Assisi, where a week will be spent under the erudite direction of Mr. Harold E. Goad. Excursions by motor coach will be made to Spello-Montefalco-Spoleto : Rieti-Greccio-Terni-Todi : Arezzo-Ribbiena-Verna.

The second week will be spent in Florence (Hotel Lucchesi), where special arrangements will be made for the entertainment of the party, who will be honorary members of the British Institute, and from where various optional excursions may be made.

The inclusive cost of the fortnight will be nineteen guineas, second class rail from London and return, hotel accommodation, meals, taxes, services, tips, transfer to and from the railway stations in Italy, and the Assisi motor coach journeys. Non-members of The Poetry Society may join the party on paying a special booking fee of 5s. Bookings should be made through the offices of the C.I.T. (Italian State Railways), 77 Regent Street, W.1, before September 12th, and passports and tourist lire obtained. Other inquiries should be addressed to the Director of The Poetry Society (who will accompany the party), 36 Russell Square, London, W.C.1.

There will be no meetings at the Hampstead Centre during September, but the following programme has been arranged for October and November 1st, 1938:

Tuesday, October 4th.—Wordsworth.
" " 18th.—Fish, reptiles and insects.
" November 1st.—R. Bridges—"The Testament of Beauty," and other poems.

THE POETRY OF YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY

PALGRAVE, it is well known, divided *The Golden Treasury* into four Books. In any reprint, as the Oxford reprint, in which the anthology is brought up to a later date, by the addition of poems of Tennyson, Browning, Swinburne, Arnold, Patmore, and their contemporaries, those poems form the Fifth Book. So one may think of the work of Yeats, Bridges, Manley Hopkins (taking the date of publication rather than the date of composition), the Sitwells, De la Mare, Blunden, Eliot, etc., as forming the Sixth Book. It may be called the poetry of yesterday and to-day, as in my title. An interesting question is: What showing will the Sixth Book make in a reprint of *The Golden Treasury* brought up to date, and published in 2038. It will be understood that by that time *all* the men's work will then have been studied, and all that work, or by far the greater part of that body of work, will by that time have been finally judged. That is far from being the case now. The only part (a large part, one admits) of the work of our times that the critical public can be said adequately to have dealt with, is that part to which the anthologists have sufficiently introduced it, and the anthologists have been those, seeking money first, who have followed fashion. This is clearest to those of us who have been reviewers for years of English verse. I have only to examine such an anthology as *The Oxford Book of Modern Verse*, and then to consult my notes as a reviewer, to be satisfied that no very rash act would be to undertake to compile fully as interesting a volume of verse of our day without including a single poem by the men and women represented in the Yeats anthology.

Book Six, in that century-hence reprint of *The Golden Treasury* that I have spoken of above, will be made, of course, of the best of the Oxford anthology, plus the best of what would be in an anthology of my own compiling (should I ever compile one), plus the best of the remaining work of our time; the poems of which both Mr. Yeats and I are unaware. My own impression, but, of course,

it is only an impression, however strong a one, is that the Sixth Book will rank highly, comparing very favourably with Palgrave's Fourth Book, that Book which is generally regarded as more attractive than even the First, the Book containing Shakespeare's poems. That, I repeat, is my impression, and it is an impression based on particular knowledge of particular poems. If ever I doubt if that Sixth Book, a hundred years hence, will make so good a showing, the doubt arises from certain general considerations.

Matthew Arnold committed himself to this (in *The Function of Criticism at the Present Time*) :—

> . . . the exercise of the creative power in the production of great works of literature or art, is not at all epochs and under all conditions possible ; and . . . therefore labour may be vainly spent in attempting it, which might with more fruit be used in preparing for it, in rendering it possible. This creative power works with elements, with materials ; what if it has not those materials, those elements, ready for its use ? In that case it must surely wait till they are ready.

So Arnold. That is a very general statement of the case, if it be indeed a " case ". He passes on to say something more specific. In this passage :—

> Now in literature,—I will limit myself to literature, for it is about literature that the question arises,—the elements with which the creative power works are ideas ; the best ideas on every matter which literature touches, current at the time. At any rate we may lay it down as certain that in modern literature no manifestation of the creative power not working with these can be very important or fruitful.

A good one, if Arnold had wished to drive home the argument by citing a particular poet, would have been the citation of Blake. Great are the *Songs of Innocence*, the *Songs of Experience*, *Milton* and *Jerusalem;* but they are undeniably a small body of work. Why did he not produce a larger body of such work ? The answer is surely that as a poet Blake was so very little aided by his contemporaries with, in Arnold's language, those materials, those elements, ready for the use of the creative power ;—he was so little provided with *such* stuff, that anything he wrote must come more wholly out of his own mind than a man's art usually

does; more out of his own reading of life and life's manifold experience. Having written that short body of work (the *Songs of Innocence*, and the rest of his intelligible verse) Blake had either to stop writing, or to draw still more deeply from himself. So the world came by his prophetic books; those so hard documents.

What, let us proceed to ask, are "the best ideas on every matter which literature touches, current at this time," and how generously do they aid and further the creative power? Are they any more propitious than in the time of Blake, or are they even less? Nobody knows for certain; and the proof that they *are* more propitious which would consist in greater poetry than Blake's being written in our time—that is precisely what is itself in doubt. Nobody knows for certain, I repeat; but the indications, the general indications, are that if the best ideas current to-day are not worth less for poetry than the ideas of Blake's day, they are worth no more. In other words, there is so much presumption as that of this Time being not a time to look for "great works of literature or art."

There is another general consideration making one doubt if this generation can be one upon whose output of poetry posterity will look back with the pride with which we look back upon the great creative work of Wordsworth and his contemporaries. It is that, when everything has been prepared (those ideas) for an outburst of poetry of world importance in any country, men *just create*: they are far too busy creating to discuss what they are creating; far too busy to seek in their body of creation for what modifications of former æsthetic principles a critical examination would reveal. Now, even a cursory examination of the Oxford anthology reveals how much thought has been spent by our generation on the examination and enunciation of principles, and, as a corollary to that, on the stuff of which poetry has of late been made, and on the nature of those for whom that poetry has been written, its audience. "Has been written," I say: I mean, of course, so far as it was written deliberately for an audience other than the poets' own minds.

Thus, of the fourteen poems of Mr. Yeats's own in the Oxford anthology two speak of art generally :

> Speech after long silence ; it is right,
> All other lovers being estranged or dead,
> Unfriendly lamplight hid under its shade,
> The curtains drawn upon unfriendly night,
> That we descant and yet again descant
> Upon the supreme theme of Art and Song :
> Bodily decrepitude is wisdom ; young
> We loved each other and were ignorant.

Then, in the poem *Coole and Ballylee, 1931*, speaking of those who used to gather around Lady Gregory at Coole, he ends with :

> We were the last romantics—chose for theme
> Traditional sanctity and loveliness ;
> Whatever's written in what poets name
> The book of the people ; whatever most can bless
> The mind of man or elevate a rhyme ;
> But all is changed, that high horse riderless,
> Though mounted in that saddle Homer rode
> Where the swan drifts upon a darkening flood.

In a poem of Bridges the word is of the stuff of our song, and of us, the singers :

> Beautiful must be the mountains whence ye come,
> And bright in the fruitful valleys the streams, wherefrom
> Ye learn your song :
> Where are those starry woods ? O might I wander there,
> Among the flowers, which in that heavenly air,
> Bloom the year long !
>
> Nay, barren are those mountains and spent the streams :
> Our song is the voice of desire, that haunts our dreams,
> A throe of the heart,
> Whose pining visions dim, forbidden hopes profound,
> No dying cadence nor long sigh can sound,
> For all our art.
>
> Alone, aloud in the raptured ear of men
> We pour our dark nocturnal secret ; and then,
> As night is withdrawn
> From these sweet-springing meads and bursting boughs of May,
> Dream, while the innumerable choir of day
> Welcome the dawn,—

—" our dark nocturnal secret."

With Manley Hopkins the word is again of the singers and the sung to. This in one poem, its beginning:

As a dare-gale skylark scanted in a dull cage
Man's mounting spirit in his bone-house, mean house, dwells—
That bird beyond the remembering his free fells;
This in drudgery, day-labouring-out life's age.

He means, man's mounting spirit: the spirit that would mount, but it has been denied wings. In another poem the kind of world in which there can be no poetry, everything being too dead against its birth, is painted in still darker colours:

On ear and ear two noises too old to end
Trench—right, the tide that ramps against the shore;
With a flood or a fall, low lull-off or all roar,
Frequenting there while moon shall wear and wend.

Left hand, off land, I hear the lark ascend,
His rash-fresh rewinded new-skeinèd score
In crisps of curl off wild winch whirl, and pour
And pelt music, till none's to spill nor spend.

How these two shame this shallow and frail town!
How ring right out our sordid turbid time,
Being pure! We, life's pride and cared-for crown,

Have lost that cheer and charm of earth's past prime:
Our make, and making break, are breaking, down
To man's last dust, drain fast towards man's first slime.

J. A. CHAPMAN

THEY WALK IN THE CITY

(December)

THEY wander, worn by time and care in shades
Of Poverty—deformed and withered by
The biting frosts of want. The sunshine fades
And sullen skies cast clouds of grey that lie
And frown on pensive wanderers' brows. They plod
Their weary footsteps to the dull dark tread
Of boots that lop and leak and let the sod
Creep coldly to their feet—numbed, lifeless, dead.
O golden rays of sun that once shone bright
And gave to beggars golden warmth to cheer
Their aching hearts—cast once again your light
Into their haggard eyelids—drawn with fear!
O winter drear steal not the life that still
Fights on to struggle with a fervent will.

E. H. RAY.

SUBURBAN SABBATH

OVER this many-housèd hill
Broods peace.
Day long, the ordered hyacinth and daffodil
Fling lazuli and topaz gleams
Into fleeting April gold.
Here, an adventuring rose
Wins from the garden fence a wide domain
Where neighbours' trees are our own heritage.
The hours are galleon-rich
That seek a Sabbath harbouring
Where harbour dreams.
Here would we keep, as suzerain,
Their cargoed peace and quietude,
Their lettered ease,
Walled in contented hermitage.
But here, too rare their anchoring;
Laden with treasure that our hands would hold,
To the dusk-dark they fade,
Borne on a six-day venturing.

MARGARET LOCHERBIE-GOFF.

VIOLET

VIOLET, her winning graces
Hides in shade-embowered places,
Will not raise her modest eyes
To the staring, ardent skies,
And, beneath her veil of green,
Violet is hardly seen.

Do you wish us, Violet,
Your sweet presence to forget?
For your perfumed voice is telling
Every passer-by your dwelling
And your soft, seductive call
Must on willing hearers fall.

Ah! You use your beauty's power
Even as the boldest flower.

ALBERT E. DEWEY.

ONE ASPECT OF MODERN POETRY

ANALOGIES, if not pushed too far, can often be useful; and I should like to suggest here some resemblances between modern poetry and that of the seventeenth century (more especially the first half.)

Our age is, it would seem, the first to see the poetry of that century in its proper perspective—the first to accord the "metaphysicals" their proper due, and it is they who represented the dominant form of poetry in their age (with the great exception of Milton). In their own day they were overrated: Cleveland went through twenty editions and Milton's *Minor Poems* but two. The eighteenth century was quite out of sympathy with them, which is not surprising, for "An age is the reversal of an age." In the last century many of them languished in neglect: literary histories (such as Taine's) ignored or misunderstood them; Donne was represented in the *Golden Treasury*[1] by a single poem—one he did not even write, and Crashaw by part of a single poem; while much of their good work was inaccessible.

But to-day the metaphysicals are largely reinstated: Donne has had a considerable vogue, a whole body of minor poetry has been edited and made available, and among undergraduates at the universities no period is so popular. Perhaps this is chiefly to be explained by the fact that both ages are periods of transition. "The note of the present epoch is that so many complexities have developed regarding material, space, time, and energy, that the simple security of the old orthodox assumptions has vanished."[2] These lines, for instance, seem as appropriate to-day as when Donne wrote them:

> "The new philosophy calls all in doubt,
> The element of fire is quite put out;
> The sun is lost and the earth, and no man's wit
> Can well direct him where to look for it.
> And freely men confess that this world's spent,
> When in the planets and the firmament
> They seek so many new; they see that this
> Is crumled out again to its atomies."

[1] First edition only referred to here.
[2] A. N. Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World.*

Three hundred years ago the transitional nature of the age was reflected in the different kinds of poetry that existed side by side,—Cavalier love-songs and Puritan epics, poems as simple as Jonson's and Herrick's, others as complex as many of Donne's and Crashaw's, and so on. "In the present chaos of opinion and belief, we may," Eliot observes, "expect to find quite different literatures existing in the same language and the same country." And so we do: the variety in England in the twentieth century is even greater, thanks partly to the easier dissemination of ideas in the modern world and to American influence, while the types and schools are both more numerous and less definable.

The number of modern poets who have written a few things "that may be permanent" is remarkable; "England has had more good poets from 1900 to the present day," says Yeats, "than during any period of the same length since the early seventeenth century." He includes a hundred in his anthology, and numerous others will come to mind—especially younger writers. That most of the significant poets in both periods have not been professional writers, in the sense that Pope, Tennyson, even Wordsworth, were deserves notice.

In a moderate number of these (I will not say many) are to be found some of the special characteristics of metaphysical poetry,[1] chiefest among which are, according to Grierson (most stimulating of all writers on that century): "The more intellectual, less verbal character of ther wit compared with the conceits of the Elizabethans; the finer psychology of which their conceits are often the expression; their learned imagery; the argumentative, subtle evolution of their lyrics; above all the peculiar blend of passion and thought, feeling and ratiocination which is their greatest achievement."

> "Can the mole take
> A census of the stars?
> Our firmament will never
> Give him headache.

[1] There are occasional examples in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but these seem rare. Whitman, by the way, calls the grass the handkerchief of God whose name you will find in the corner.

> The man who nuzzles
> In a woman's lap
> Burrows towards a night
> Too deep for puzzles."

That is part of a poem by Day Lewis, as a modern illustration. Eliot helps "To keep our metaphysics warm":

> "We two shall lie together, lapt
> In five per cent Exchequer Bond";
>
> "I have measured out my life with coffee spoons."
>
> "To have squeezed the universe into a ball
> To roll it towards some overwhelming question."

is faintly reminiscent of Marvell's *To his Coy Mistress*, acknowledged to be the greatest of all poems in this style; and so is Edwin Muir when he writes of:

> "a runner who'll outrun
> Man's long shadow driving on,
> Burst through the gates of history,
> And hang the apple on the tree."

Such lines as Auden's "Do thoughts grow like feathers, the dead end of life?" and "sent home Hermetically sealed with shame" have the manner; and MacNeice's "Deflating the trim Balloon of lust." It is unmistakable in Ronald Bottrall's:

> "Your grapnel eyes dredging my body through
> Haul up the uncharted silt, efface
> The mud flats of impeding residue."

Sometimes it is less distinct (there is no clear boundary to the style), as in these stanzas:

> "Dawn breaks behind the eyes;
> From poles of skull and toe the windy blood
> Slides like a sea;
> Nor fenced, nor staked, the gushers of the sky
> Spout to the rod,
> Divining in a smile the oil of tears."
>
> (Dylan Thomas.)

> "Law makes long spokes of the short stakes of man.
> Your well fenced out real estate of mind
> No high flat of the nomad citizen
> Looks over, or train leaves behind."
>
> (William Empson's *Legal Fiction*.)

Occasionally it is of a mystical variety (the poet is writing of a sunflower):

> " Its disk was large with ripened seed:
> A red line on the gray,
> The flames, as yet afar, I knew
> Would gnaw the world away."

And not only has the style been revived: its territory has been extended beyond love poetry, religious poetry, elegy and eulogy—classes that embraced nearly all the examples of three hundred years ago.

The presence of metaphysical conceits is, I think, a healthy sign, since such are generally born of the imagination (or of fancy, at least). " Passionate thinking," Grierson observes, " is always apt to become metaphysical, probing and investigating the experience from which it takes its rise." But conceits are liable to be dangerous in the hands of all but the few who have consistently unimpeachable taste: did not Crashaw in a poem on Mary Magdalen compare her eyes to " walking baths," Herbert bid the " sad heart " dry his tears on Christ's burial-clothes, Lovelace accuse love of making a whipping-top of his bleeding heart, and Cleveland (probably with his tongue in his cheek) throw off this couplet:

> " Love storms his lips and takes the fortress in,
> For all the bristled turnpikes of his chin " ?

As for " learned imagery " in the moderns, it is there but the learning is not theological, it is scientific or literary.

One of the many striking points about Donne is that he completely rejected the outworn classical mythology. To-day we have again turned our backs on the myths: classical, Arthurian, Northern, Christian, all have been thrown overboard (although Yeats and Eliot have delayed them a little).

A further resemblance, also the outcome of a realistic attitude, is to be found in the use of rhythms approximating to those of ordinary colloquial speech—the cause of much misunderstanding both of Donne's music and that of many of the moderns.[1]

[1] Although I cannot undertake to defend either party throughout.

Finally, the concentrated nature of the typical poetry of both periods is remarkable. In our own day it seems to be the direct result of a reaction against the diffusiveness of nineteenth century romanticism. The tendency first becomes striking in Hopkins, whose emotion "seems to try and utter all its words in one"; and among the tenets (formulated in 1913) of the Imagists was: "Most of us believe that concentration is the very essence of poetry." We are, many insist, in a new classical age: free verse has fallen out of favour; there is a movement towards exactness and polish; Pope and the eighteenth century are coming into fashion. But it is well to recall the words of Croce: "Great artists and great work, or at least the great parts of it, can be called neither classicist nor romantic . . . for they are both classical and romantic." The terms, if indeed they have any meaning left, must be used in a relative sense.

Whether such resemblances as I have touched on are important is perhaps doubtful, but I hope they are not without interest, concerning as they do the relations between our own much abused age and the rich and various age of Donne and Marvell, Carew and Vaughan (how rich I hardly realized till I came to read such minors as Henry King, Heath, Stanley and even those represented in a book published last year, *Rare Poems of the Seventeenth Century*).

TERENCE HEYWOOD

The Council of The Poetry Society acknowledge with thanks the following recent gifts to the Library:—*Angol Költok a huszadik századaban* (Királyi Magyar Egyètemi Nyomoda Kiadasa, Budapest,—a collection of English poems (Hardy, Edmund Blunden, W. H. Davies, John Drinkwater, W. B. Yeats and others) presented by the editor and translator: *Specimens of English Sonnets* selected by the Rev. Alexander Dyce (London, William Pickering, 1833), inscribed to "William Wordsworth, esq.," presented by Sir Arnold Wilson, M.P., *The Painted Cup* by Barbara Bingley, wood-engravings by Lettice Sandford (Boar's Head Press), (No. 117 of limited edition of 150), presented by the author. The new books reviewed in this and recent issues of THE POETRY REVIEW have been added to the Library and may be examined there. A marble portrait bust of John Milton (sculptor unknown) has been acquired.

A TABLET IN THE EAST CLOISTER WESTMINSTER ABBEY

JANE LISTER
dear childe
died Oct. 7th, 1688.

Dear Child,

How came your simple tablet here,
Amongst the noblest in the land?
Great tombs abound on either hand
For Kings and Queens are buried near
Soldiers and countless men of fame.
If you had beauty, charm and wit,
There is no mention here of it.
No eulogies enhance your name,
But just one word among the few
Inscribed, the famed might envy you.
Enough, this word is graven here,
It is enough that you were "dear."

ELIZABETH BARRETT.

MAYBE

COULD I but be the voice through which
Resounding winds of God might blow
In powerful shout,
Or solemn chant,
Or melody
Divinely low.
Touched with the sweet serenity
Of holy peace and amity:

Oh! Could I be the passage, cleft,
Where through God's organ notes might rove
In diapason depths to stir
All desolated hearts to love:
Should I, quite gladly, all forego
My friends, my entity, my pride,
And listen as though one outside?

EDITH MARY MANN.

THE GREATEST GIFT

THERE was a clink of golden caskets full of gems,
A swishing sound of softly falling silk,—
Then silence only. . . . 'Neath the misty hems
Of Mary's veil the Baby nestled close.
From all the precious gifts He only chose
The sweetest treasure, lo ! a drop of milk,
The snowy pearl of Life His Mother gave. . . .
And then, the tiny face that was quite grave
Turned suddenly so bright and gay like dawn
When sunrays flutter 'long the dewy lawn.

For only He, the Baby seemed to see
Who crossed the threshold meekly, silently,
Who brought that breath of bracing, sparkling air
As though the world's vast forests whispered there,
Who made the lowly place look like a cloud
That burst with glowing gold the scarlet shroud
Of dream-bewitchéd eve. . . . Aye ! Someone came
Who was as old as weary Earth, whose name
Was mentioned but with awe by mortal man,
A name all loved and feared. . . . There Pan
Stood close before the Babe—the grand
And ancient god. . . . He did not bend his knee,
He only wielded in his mighty hand
A flute of seven reeds, the flute of Arcady,
Whereon his lips breathed simple and sylvan songs,
The while his eyes were pleading wistfully.
A spirit gazes thus who yearns and longs
To find the source of all infinity. . . .

The rush of tiny things was faintly heard,
Of creatures wee and wild, of hare and bird,
The panting of a deer—its shadow on the wall ;
And lonely mountains' echo seemed to call.
A playful bubbling softly filled the room,
The voice of brooks—followed by swish and boom
Of breakers falling over rock and beach ;
Enchanting sweet or solemn hymns sang each
Reed throbbing 'neath the lips of Pan, to say
What even magic words could not convey.

Then suddenly our Lady's wond'ring eye
  Perceived a smile upon the Baby's lips,
A smile that knew of " whence and whither, why." . . .
  He stretched His hands,—His rosy fingertips
Like flowers, like tendrils tried to grasp the tune
That traced the air with beams of sun and moon.

Forgotten were the gifts of Magi-Kings.
  Pan gave his heart,—the soul of struggling Earth,
And in that hour the little and humbled things
  Of Nature gained new life in mystic birth.

Obeying Pan's command they learned to yield,
  The storms calmed down, the waves beneath His feet
  Smoothed down their angry folds and silky carpets spread
  To mark His paths o'er depths abysmal, dead.
He sanctified the lilies of the field ;
  Trees served to show His triumph and defeat.
From withered fig-tree to the deadly rood
  Ah ! everything served Him, His aims, His work.
Aye ! E'en the rocking ground where fainting Mary stood,
  And e'en the bleeding sun that died in mirk. . . .
When in His final agony His head bent down,
Earth gave her pain, the thorns, to make His crown.

M. KERTESZFKY, " CLOUDRIDER."

Budapest.

INTERPRETATION

O DEEP interpretation
Revealed beyond our proof !
Thou almost new creation,
So near, yet so aloof !

Without thy inner vision
All truth from life were fled,
And we, in our misprision,
Were nearer death than dead.

DAVID FRIDLANDER.

NOT THE ROSE . . .

NOT the rose,
The flaunting beauty of summer,
Would I be;
Not the rose
But the scent of the rose,
The stirring, invisible
Awakener of memories
That gives
And then passes.
Not the rose
But the scent of the rose.

Not the lark,
Crested, bright-eyed,
Would I be;
Not the lark
But the song of the lark;
Not the ascending
But the notes that are left
In the air
When the singer's descended.
Not the lark
But the song of the lark.

Not the butterfly,
The coloured loveliness of wings,
Would I be;
Not the butterfly
But the flight of the butterfly;
Not the alighting
On the flower
But the memory of the touch
After the departing.
Not the butterfly
But the flight of the butterfly.

Not the woman,
Not flesh and blood and bones,
Would I be;

Not the woman
But the spirit of woman;
The unseen, yet knowable,
Strange, indefinable something
That lingers
When flesh is forgotten.
Not the woman
But the spirit of woman.

HILDA M. SLADE.

CHALLENGE

GO to the high mountains! Feel
The steel,
The finished agony
Of utter impersonality.
And naked to the verge
Of nothingness, stretch up and quake
Your little hands against the sky
And shake
At the surge
Of terror from the frozen gate
Of Time. Then, if you dare, defy!
Say "I am great,
For I am I! I! I!"

G. MORTAN LAMBERT.

TO LOVE

O LOVE, if you were not, then nought would be,
For you feed death, life, joy and misery.
Love, I hate you more and more,
Love, ah, leave me nevermore,
You torture and you make life hell,
You bless and you assuage as well;
God, that two states in one could dwell!
Leave us, O Love, and take away your spell,
Let Death command and o'er all reign,
(Since Hate is merely Love again)
And in Eternal Death to find
Rest for the weary human mind.

LESLIE HERBERT PARRY.

ILLUSION PREFERRED

IF one could rationalize
Your attributes a bit,
And somehow realize
That hands and arms and eyes
Are not the gates of the ultimate ;
That lips are only there
To make a mouth to eat with
And not to show the way to heaven
As one had thought they were ;
And could one feel you not as a myth,
And the body that you leaven
As something strictly tangible,
And gentle breathing while you rest
Not as the flutter of butterflies' wings
But even at the very best,
As mechanism that's working well,
How one would *miss* these things . . .
Loving them otherwise. . .
And only this would be the prize :
One lady less to idolize.

F. F. GORELL BARNES.

OF AN OLD WOMAN

THESE are the clothes she will not wear again :
Black shawls and gowns in drawers and closets laid,
And she is sleeping, peaceful, unafraid.
'Tis I, not she, who bear the weight of pain.
This quiet blouse, this dull and jetted dress
Yield her most patiently ; but I can feel
The faint scent of her hair and body steal
Elusively from out their passiveness,
All laden with reproach. Their dark embrace
That held her lovingly, I fear will bind
And stifle all my dumb and aching mind.—
There is no fear upon *her* placid face.
She does not know she will not rise again.
'Tis I, not she, who bear the weight of pain.

KATHLEEN ANDERSON.

FINIS

OH! let me die alone,
With none to grieve,
I cannot bear to feel
That my faint breath
Will stab a loving heart
To agony, my groping eyes
See fear's reflection.
All that I've been is mine
At this last hour,
Small braveries long past
Will help me now
To face the great
Wide acres of eternity.
But if in your dear face
I see remembrance,
I cannot leave in peace,
Nor yet forget warm earth,
And the soft scent of cowslips.
Oh let me die alone!

WINIFRED COLERIDGE.

THE GOLDEN AGE

"THE good old times!" my heart with anger burns
Whene'er I hear that put-the-clock-back phrase
Disparage progress of these vital days.
Life's vanquished one in reverie returns
To some romantic age, and never learns
How legend, glamourous as evening rays,
With phantom beauty decks those ancient ways—
Thus sunset-gold some squalid window turns.

The great new times! The world in fever groans,
Labouring in bloody agony of birth
With that fine age which for her pain atones—
When shared abundance has abolished dearth,
When service is the fundament of thrones,
And common weal unites all lands of earth.

G. S. ODDY.

A NEW LANGUAGE FOR POETRY?

"MILTON," says Mr. Tristram Coffin, *New Poetry of New England* (Oxford University Press, 9s.) "was an artist at putting new life into words." New life in the old language. That is the answer to the literary agitators who find language outworn, and cry for new forms to embody their thought. But to irradiate common words with an uncommon spirit is the poet's gift, and poetry itself can be defined as "the subtle alchemist that in a trice life's leaden metal into gold transmutes." The thought inevitably occurs: have the greatest poets demanded a new language? Inevitably, they have been conscious of the inadequacy of words, yet they have never been under the delusion that any other *kind* of language could help them. The difficulty lies deeper than that. It lies in the fact that no words *can* embody the depth and variety of human feeling, the profundity and complexity of spiritual and emotional values. Here only music can help. Music is the only possible language for the inexpressible. Poetry struggles to interpret it in words, and must inevitably fail, although the strange, never-yet-defined diction of poetry, the mysterious turn of phrase and manipulation of rhythm peculiar to poetic language, comes nearer to conveying the essence of these values than any other use of language can. An interesting international periodical, *Transition* (published in England by Faber and Faber), is concerned mainly with the necessity for a new language, new expression in every form of art, and many experiments of undoubted value have been tried, notably in *Frontier Poem* by Eugene Jolas, which appeared in the spring issue. This poem was written in English, French and German simultaneously, and, to anyone intimate with the three languages, was an experiment that gave unique pleasure, and a quite unexpected sense of satisfaction and completeness. It seems not unlikely that this internationalizing of literature may play a very significant part in the future peace of the world.

The question as to how far and to what extent poetry should reflect contemporary influences and conditions is hedged about with difficulty and controversy, and the task of the critic drowned in a spate of contemporary poetry

tends to be unduly hard. There is of course a sense in which he is faced with an impossibility: contemporary criticism can never be final, since it lacks the perspective only time can give. In even fifty years from now most of the poetry at present considered worthy of the critics' attention will be forgotten.

Unfortunately, there are in poetry no absolute inviolable principles which must be adhered to. Centuries ago Aristotle laid down various dramatic principles, and these have been fairly generally observed, even by the modern playwrights. Apparently it was found that such rules were *necessary* to hold the attention and win the approbation of the audience. But poets do not write for a visible audience, so the problem of attention and approbation does not arise —rather unfortunately, perhaps, when we consider some of the unpleasant examples of verse the public are expected to accept as poetry. Mr. Tristram Coffin has much to say of the modern tendencies in verse, and the present-day reaction from the high conception of poetry. He speaks of

> the very minor place romantic love holds in lyric poetry at the present. What was once a star of the first magnitude is now one of the fifth, and almost below the horizon. It is not that men no longer make love, but that our poets have lost their trust in the ancient spiritual concept of the centrality of a certain kind of love.

This, he thinks, is

> partly because we have explored scientifically the biological character of love, partly because we have lost faith in most of the old patterns of centrality.

The idea of scientific exploration of the passion of love fills every man of understanding with various mixed emotions, but primarily perhaps with a certain ironical sense of amusement. Is it really possible that erudition can betray such ignorance? Is it true that brilliant scientists can so waste their valuable time? Do they really believe that love can be reduced to scientific formulae? If indeed it were possible, there would no longer be torment and unrest in love, nor paradisal glimpses either, and art would automatically disappear, since art feeds on the incalculable element in human love, which the scientists in their blindness overlook.

Of this element poetry is mainly wrought. Of this, and of faith, also of that other quality too generally ignored by the moderns : beauty. It is this divine trinity, un-at-home in a shadowy and fallen world, that breeds the indefinable nostalgia that is the life breath of poetry.

It is of course natural that the poet, by virtue of his sensitivity, his chameleon-like quality of absorbing psychic colour and atmosphere, should to a large extent reflect the changes he apprehends everywhere around him, but if he is a true poet he has also pre-eminently the gift of discrimination, and selection—or rather, rejection of all that is unsuited to the particular pattern he has found not only valuable but inevitable to himself. In this way he instinctively discerns the eternal in the temporal, the universal in the particular, rejecting the trivial, while at the same time discovering significance in many things considered commonplace by men of lesser vision. Mr. Coffin in his lectures on Robert Frost speaks of his

> eyes seeing the exquisite patterns of rightness in the simplest things . . . tasks of day to day, year to year . . . yet like poems full of symbols. . . .

Here, as always in real poetry, the manner not the matter is the test, the individual approach, the new spirit illumining old things. Many nature poets, for example, have written of the hidden life confined in a tree's buds, but only one, Robert Frost, could create the wonderful lines :

> The trees that have it in their pent-up buds
> To darken nature and be summer woods.

And when Mr. Coffin speaks of the affectations of the pseudo-radicals, the moderns who are always searching for eccentricities to startle the reader into attention, he knows well that such searching can only be due to a lack of the poetic fire. The pseudo-ones, as he remarks, invariably get the most space in the news, and with the critics, these radicals who leave out capitals and punctuation-marks, and experiment with absurdities in language more suited to a lunatic asylum than a civilized community. Have they really anything of value to say, or are they fundamentally sensationalists, ego-centrics who have certainly never heard of the selflessness of art ?

> Both Robinson and Frost are quiet poets. Often the great ones are. They never had to preach their newness.

They, like Browning, as I have said elsewhere, were content to write poetry, they did not argue about it. Browning wrote no prefaces to his books, proclaiming his belief in his innovations; he continually created new forms, in a manner far more sensational and real than his rather wordy contemporary, Wordsworth. He left the work to speak for itself.

T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound ushered in a phase in literature which we have since been too often forced to regret, for, as usual, many of the disciples have betrayed the original vision of the masters, and imitations, lacking the genuine force which animated the originals, prove dry and heavy. Much of the poetry of Mr. Auden in his *Selected Poems* (Faber and Faber, 3s. 6d.), for example, is arid and excessively unpoetical. It is rare to find even a single line with the true ring of poetry. This is not a matter of modernistic technique, as the glorious work of Gerard Manley Hopkins, perhaps the most startling innovator poetry has ever known, conclusively proves. The moderns profoundly admire Hopkins: they imitate his idiosyncrasies of technique, but his spirit is inimitable. Possibly the poet most akin to him at the present time is Mr. Francis Berry. To his development one looks with interest and hope, for he combines modernism and romanticism easefully; an infinity of interesting techniques are his, and his words pulse with "the passion and the life," with a fire too physical to be called spiritual, too spiritual to be called physical. "Nor soul helps flesh more, now, than flesh helps soul."[1] A very true and refreshing incarnation.

In much of Mr. Auden's work the exaltation of the commonplace is carried to excess. Here is the opening of one of the Choruses in *The Dog Beneath the Skin:*

> You with shooting-stick and cases for field-glasses, your limousines parked in a circle: who visit the public games, observing in burberries the feats of the body . . .

[1] Browning, *Rabbi Ben Ezra.*

Again, the abandoning of the definite article often produces absurd results :

> There head falls forward, fatigued at evening,
> And dreams of home,
> Waving from window, spread of welcome,
> Kissing of wife under single sheet . . .
> . . . .
> Save him from hostile capture,
> From sudden tiger's spring at corner ;
> Protect his house,
> His anxious house where days are counted
> From thunderbolt protect.

However, it is noticeable that his later work is moving slowly but surely towards poetry ; there is less obscurity, less harshness, though still far too much disillusion and despair. " Not to be born is the best for man " is the reiterant note in the last poem in the book. In this philosophy there is no place for God or the destiny of man. Which is precisely the root of most of the contemporary poets' trouble. Which of them can write a poem like Hopkins' *Hurrahing for Harvest*, which, out of sheer delight, and by way of relief, I cannot refrain from quoting in full :

> Summer ends now ; barbarous in beauty, the stooks arise
> Around ; up above, what wind-walks ! what lovely behaviour
> Of silk-sack clouds ! has wilder, wilful-wavier
> Meal-drift moulded ever and melted across skies ?
>
> I walk, I lift up, I lift up heart, eyes,
> Down all that glory in the heavens to glean our Saviour ;
> And, eyes, heart, what looks, what lips yet gave you
> Rapturous love's greeting of realer, of rounder replies ?
>
> And the azurous hung hills are his world-wielding shoulder
> Majestic—as a stallion stalwart, very-violet-sweet !—
> These things, these things were here and but the beholder
> Wanting ; which two when they once meet,
> The heart rears wings bold and bolder
> And hurls for him, O half hurls earth for him off under his feet.

Here is almost a superfluity of innovation, all Hopkins's fantastic juggling with words and imagery, with adjectives, with new rhythms, yet none of these peculiarities can be denounced as affectations. Why ? Because it was passion

that drove him to these excesses, the passion of the great poet.

Inevitably side by side with Mr. Auden, we consider Mr. Cecil Day Lewis, preaching, however, in his *Overtures to Death* (Cape, 5s.) a gospel beyond despair: "Nothing is innocent now but to act for life's sake." This is the victory of truth, of life stripped of all fictions, discovering at last the *naked* truth, which is now seen to be, in fact, beauty. There can be no beauty in falsites, fictions are hollow, only truth solid, enduring. His concern throughout has been with truth, and in this pursuit he has kept pace with beauty more easily than many of his contemporaries. It is difficult not to suspect, in fact, that the real Day Lewis is to be found in such poems as *In the Heart of Contemplation* and *Maple and Sumach*, though the exigencies of modern life lead him from time to time down sharp inclines, as in the rather deplorable *Spring Song*, and in certain other recurrent apparently unjustifiable passages and phrases throughout the book. *Passage from Childhood* makes many vitally interesting assertions, and deals with childhood in the mature manner certain other equally famed poets of the modern school have not attained to: their treatment remains adolescent. The line "Eternity stretched like a howl of pain," in fact the whole of this penultimate stanza, has a nobility and a universality which is of the very stuff of poetry.

Idris Davies, *Gwalia Deserta* (Dent, 2s. 6d.) and Eisdell Tucker, *Stony Ground* (Macmillan, 4s. 6d.) are both poets of pain: Mr. Davies of the pain of humanity, Mr. Tucker of the apparent failure of Christianity. Says Mr. Davies:

> It is bitter to know that history
> Fails to teach the present to be better than the past
> For man was a slave in the morning of time
> And a slave he remains to the last,

while Mr. Tucker laments that

> The words of Christ we pick apart,
> affirm, dispute, deny;
> this for the conscience—this the heart;
> but Christ we crucify,

and again:

Come and behold—to what derision—
the Christian creeds have crowned the Christ
with thorn.

The seed has fallen on stony ground. Mr. Tucker knows the remedy for the ills Mr. Davies bemoans, and knows the remedy will be rejected, as it has always been :

We will devise camps for the unemployed,
youth movements for the idle,
distractions for the hungry of heart,
but we dare not introduce religion
to a world in the present state of unrest.

His book, appearing on September 23rd of this present year of crisis, in the very month of crisis, came as a voice crying salvation for a stricken world. He is a good example of the poet-realist. Poets alone see the stark realities under the trappings that delude most men :

. . . an army is a beautiful sight ;
but if these uniforms were filled
with faceless corpses,
demented women,
and the half-things without sense
still lingering in hospitals and asylums
quietly,
so as not to remind us of the last war,
a great deal of our pleasure in the parade
might be destroyed.

The poet shares with the prophet the torturing vision of things as they are, and, like Shelley, has no choice but to labour to remedy the evils. Both Mr. Tucker and Mr. Davies are expert in the new diction ; in Poem XXIX Mr. Davies proves himself capable of creating beauty with unadorned simple language, and there is one poem in particular in Mr. Tucker's volume so lovely in its simplicity that it must be quoted in full :

It was in a garden that God first walked with man,
in a garden man betrayed him,
in a garden was buried the body they took from the cross ;
and out of that cold dry seed
sown in a borrowed plot
burst the full flower of the Resurrection.

Then how can men walk in gardens
tranquilly,
and not—sooner or later—
be shaken to the heart
by a Thought?

In Mr. Prince's Poems (Faber, 5s.) also there is modernism mingled with frequent beauty, especially in the poem *For Fugitives*, where the imagery suggests the far reaches of the racial unconscious. In *In a Province*, and elsewhere, there are affinities with the poetry of Thomas Hardy, himself a modernist in diction, although he is rarely mentioned in this connection. He was a master of stark, unadorned verse, often most poignant in its simplicity and unique imagery. There are in Mr. Prince's poems occasional outbreaks of intellectual obscurity; this fault, however, seems to be declining among contemporary poets. It surely reached its climax some few years ago.

Two books from poets of the older school, Mr. Wilfrid Gibson and Mr. Hilaire Belloc, have recently appeared. In Mr. Belloc's volume *Sonnets and Verse* (Duckworth, 7s. 6d.) there is little that is new, and among some true and beautiful poems, too many satires. Mr. Gibson's is the true poetry of pity; *Coming and Going* (Oxford University Press, 5s.) he has the genuine understanding of the "universal brotherhood" too often expressed by moderns through violent political propaganda disguised as poetry; Mr. Gibson knows the true poet's way:

I felt no tremor and I caught no sound;
But a fresh crack scored my ceiling; white dust dropped
Sprinkling my polished table.

Fathoms beneath my comfortable room,
In the pit's dripping gloom
A new drift's rock-roof, insecurely propped,
Had settled; and, in settling, crushed just then
The life out of six men:
Six hearts had stopped.

But I, unguessing, looked up fretfully
At the fresh crack; and rose impatiently
To wipe the dust from my mahogany.

The poem *Cleveland Night* is modern in content: he talks of furnaces, of brace-and-bit, of iron and cinders, but the result is poetry, and *The Match* in its brevity and poignancy touches universals with simplicity and ease. Another poem of pity, of agonized pity, and of the brotherhood of all creation, is *The Island Sheep*.

Margaret Stanley-Wrench, winner of last year's Newdigate Prize, is a genuine poet, but in her first published volume, *Newsreel* (Macmillan, 5s.) there are evidences of need for care. The double noun-adjectives, so skilfully used by Hopkins, can become a serious fault, and often her poems are spoilt by a last line which falls heavy, as for example in *Sunday Night* and *Squirrel in a Cage*. It is unfortunate to find "sun-high," "eagle-keen," "silk-smooth," all in a short poem of thirteen lines, *Flyer*, and in *Fighters* "snake-sharp," "sun-sleeked," "sun-drowsy" in the first stanza of nine lines. Hopkins does it, we know, but there is only one Hopkins. And throughout all her poems the same slow prose-rhythm tends to create a monotony; there is no surprise in the diction, no sudden poetic turn of phrase. The poem *They Have No Memorial*, for example, which would read exquisitely as prose, fails as poetry:

> No eye, though aware of the delicate movement
> of sap in the tremulous stem, or the new blade piercing
> rain-sweet soil, can print up in the frail
> flesh the green spring to behold in snow-white weather.
> Nor can the known face, flesh warm with the light
> of a fire throbbing in shadow, be clear to the spent
> memory chilled by distance and the pale
> shadow annulling cherished features, tracing
> no clean delight of familiar cheek sharp to the white
> clarity of a window fresh with the bleakness of water.

These are faults that in a poet of Miss Stanley-Wrench's calibre need attention, for some of her work reaches a very high standard indeed, as in the poems *Horses*, *Spent Utterance*, *Strange Light* (an exquisite last stanza), *Dangerous Bound*, *Portrait Sitting*, and many others.

In a group of poems by various other writers there is little indication of newness, either in thought or diction.

Mr. Allan Macdonald's *The Stars*, (Heath Cranton, 3s. 6d.) indeed, appears about sixty years too late, and is a good example of the type of poetry mentioned by Mr. Coffin in his first lecture, "The World that is gone." As for Mr. A. W. Barton's *The Green Nettle* (Blackwell, 2s. 6d.), quotation will best convey the quality of his writing :

> The black branches
> Of acacias
> Veining a sky of blue
> Are cut by telephone wires
> Leading to
> The Doctor's.

For Mr. Wemyss Reid's *Across the Silence* (Blackwell, 2s. 6d.) there can be nothing but respect, for here there is no "new language," nor need for it, he speaks the heart's language, the tender language of a simple and lovely human love and grief, very moving in its simplicity. Then there is a book of verses like thistledown, Miss Ruth Munro's *First Poems* (Oliver and Boyd, 3s. 6d.), deliciously frail and charming, and a little reminiscent of the poetry of Mary Webb. The verses by Brian Waters (*The Golden Oriole*, Blackwell, 2s. 6d.) make delightful reading too. There is a charming fancy in the tiny poem *Fallen Stars*. These are short lyrical verses hinting at profounder depths than they actually reveal.

Mr. Leonard Caplan's *Winged Persuasions* (Heath Cranton, 3s. 6d.) shows that he is wholly unaffected by anything new in poetry. The modern reader will not take kindly to such lines as "From vexed torments of my soul's amaze," or "And o'er my soul its mystic radiance shed." Torments, souls, radiance, mysticism have not ceased, nor ever will cease, to be of the substance and basis of poetry, but the modern mind does demand new ways of saying the age-old things.

Nor is Mr. George Sterling in his *Poems to Vera* (Oxford University Press, 8s. 6d.) afraid of the traditional material of poetry. He deals in pure romanticism, but he has produced a book of an aloof, chaste beauty. Paradisal, Elysian, breathing the crystal air of the Golden Age, his poems are content to speak love's language only, needing

nothing "new" in form or diction. And in Miss Ada Nelson's *Order of the Eagle* (Blackwell, 2s. 6d.) the element of surprise awakens us suddenly to a sense of a richer, greater life, apocalyptic, mystical, the life of the legendary gods and of the angels and archangels, and the glorious wind-swept earth and skies. She has a fine mastery of rhythm, an instinctive sense of speed, and of the colour and movement of words. Her work again, and finally, declares the adequacy of language precisely as it is. Skilfully used, as she uses it, and as the great poets have always known how to use it, there is no need for any other.

DALLAS KENMARE.

REMEMBERING

WHAT ghost-like thoughts knock on the door
Of memory's unfathomed store?
What fading echo floats where wind
The long corridors of the mind?

Where have I seen this face before,
Those eyes I thought to see no more,
But still come back in dreams to me
Out of oblivion's darkened sea?

And strange fantastic thoughts that I
Once was so sure were born to die
But lived intact in that queer tomb
The mind's close-shuttered lumber room.

And moods dredged from the deeps of Time
That once made living seem sublime
Or coloured worlds that rise above
The pages of old books we love.

So from the place where lost things lie
Comes the first kiss, the lover's sigh,
The march of men who know their doom,
Undying hours in a quiet room.

C. WREY GARDINER.

WHY?

IF the dead be happy
Why do we feel
So tenderly for them
While our wounds heal?

Why do we ponder
On all that they bore
And the little we did
When we might do more?

Why should their chattels
In meek disuse,
Gloves, a handbag
Or pair of shoes,

Like melody wafted
From vanished years
Suddenly wring from us
Anguished tears?

If the dead be happy
As wise men say
Why do we grieve for them
Every day?

CHARLES WHITBY.

CHOPIN

AS if your fingers clasped about my brow
Had power to smooth the heaving that was there,
In comfort I saw you reading
Ere I left.
And here, where the lamp pales the street,
I hear no more the music that we had;
The heavy night is numb about my ears,
The dear, worn prelude ended, and the touch
Of your small fingers an imagined coolness
Turned to warmth.
Proudly I bear this evening with me now,
Though the light fades, your hands have slipped away,
And still the music dies behind the door.

FRANCIS DUNBAR MARSHALL.

A NEW POET OF SCIENCE

Mr. Kenneth Hallowes

MR. KENNETH HALLOWES who, four years ago, published in his *Poetical Works* (Methuen) a number of " poems of science " still stands as the only writer and scientist of our time, with the possible exception of Julian Huxley, to attempt to establish any direct relationship between science and poetry. Prior to the publication of the poems, their author read a paper on " The New Poetry of Science " to a large audience in the City Temple. Interest was considerable at the time, and when the poems were published press critics were lavish in praise and in the hope that, as The Poetry Review then put it, he was " laying the foundation stone to the new school of poetry."

Unfortunately, it was not all so simple as that. The apathy of a world which preferred its science popularised in the cheap prose of catchpenny periodicals slowly choked the enthusiasm roused by Mr. Kenneth Hallowes' work. Before discussing the poems themselves, I shall make bold to cite them *in toto* as a sincere attempt to bring poetry back into gear with modern life, for I am convinced that the apathy with which all such work is treated has no relation to its standard of literary excellence or otherwise, but is based on a far wider bias and is but one manifestation of it. I think there is a feeling abroad that any direct liason between science—that is, departmental science as we know it in our time—and poetry—poetry in the traditional convention—is unnatural. A stunt. The so-called practical man, besides regarding poetry lock, stock and barrel as effete, also sees science only in the specialized sense, as chemistry, physics and so on, each in itself subdivided into further specialized compartments, remote, the obscure workings of a portion of an arbitrarily analysed whole.

The recent increase of our scientific knowledge is so vast that, far from being able to make the whole of knowledge our province, we, as individuals, can hope for only the most superficial understanding of scientific research in general, together with a more intimate knowledge of one or at most two of its departments. Any attempt to make

generalizations about scientific matters is, quite rightly, regarded with suspicion. Hence the lack of regard for a poetry which is suspected of dealing with "science" as such.

This is a lamentable misunderstanding of Mr. Hallowes' aim. He himself has stated clearly that his object is "to enshrine the most accurate science in the most beautiful poetry." There is nothing of the sensationalist in this. If anything, it tends too far the other way. It may be that he abides too faithfully by the departmentalization of science; that he attaches too much ultimate importance to the little gems of specialized knowledge with which the research student is, from time to time, rewarded. I suspect that, for the sake of a thick-skulled public, he has to be a little heavy-handed in his treatment and particularly in his analogies. This is natural in a pioneer, and can no more be called a fault than can the ruggedness of Wyatt or the early Elizabethan dramatists. One of his sonnets, "A Bed of Limestone," gives me the feeling that the poet is having to force the pace:

> One morn, through fields of wheat of emerald blade,
> I took the path to Selwa. Far away,
> O'er Jhingrai hung, a cloud of smoke, blue-gray,
> Told how farm-hands an early breakfast made;
> And when I reached, upon the hill, a glade
> Of stunted trees, I started to survey,
> And found a bed of limestone in decay,
> Between two Deccan lava-flows inlaid.
>
> The Book of Time was open at that place,
> I read the history of our planet's past,
> The thickness of the limestone, from its base,
> Told of a period of quiescence vast
> That intervened—till forth the lava flowed,
> And discord to a world of peace bestowed.

Science is not backing him up too well. The break seems to come between the established geological fact (admirably expressed) and its application to "life in general," probably because the science presented is merely a departmental one, and we have not yet been trained to realize its full significance. In fact, its full significance, its co-ordination with

the discoveries of science's other branches, has not yet been achieved at all. We have not yet learnt—for good or ill—to achieve an entirely scientific attitude to life as a whole.

For what this scientific attitude would be, and what would be its effect on and position in our development, we might do worse to consider Plato's opinion. Although "it was a thing he admired intensely and valued very highly . . . he does not believe that science in itself can lead us to the truth . . . it gives an explanation of the facts before it which might account for them, but beyond that it does not and should not pretend to go."[1] He regards it as a means rather than an end, and whether or not we agree with his hypothesis of an Absolute we can hardly deny him this. His point is that absolute reality (perhaps "realization" would be a better word) is denied to most men. It is the poet who first sees it in odd wild glimpses. The scientist takes the next step up towards it. He rationalizes and, by deduction, extends the poet's material. But neither he nor the poet achieves the whole.

Modern psychologists endorse this opinion. Dr. I. A. Richards writes:

> The poet is not writing as a scientist. . . . The experience itself, the tide of impulses sweeping through the mind, is the source and sanction of the words. . . .
>
> Science, as our most elaborate way of *pointing* to things systematically tells us and can tell us nothing about the nature of things in any *ultimate* sense. It can never answer any question in the form: *What* is so and so? it can only tell us *how* such and such behave. And it does not attempt to do more than this.[2]

Thus poetry and science both throw a limited light, from different angles, on the *ultimate* nature of things; but neither of them alone can illumine it perfectly—here lies the justification of Mr. Kenneth Hallowes' experiment. Yet, not only are they incapable of reaching ultimate understanding individually, they cannot even do it combined. The realization of the "absolute truth" or "ultimate reality" (whichever way you like to put it) only comes

[1] Professor J. A. K. Thompson, *Plato and Aristotle*.

[2] *Science and Poetry*.

when science and poetry are transcended to a higher plane of philosophy, and meet there. And this is the condition which produces the real poetry of science.

We are getting near this condition in the sestet of Mr. Hallowes' *Deccan Lavas*:

> With clutching hands these waters for an age
> Have drawn aside the shrouding cloak of soil,
> So that I read, as from an open page,
> How lavas from Earth's centre thrown on high,
> With clouds of steam, compose this world of toil—
> This planet where we mortals live and die.

This is an achievement. A direct expression of the fundamentals of the poet's attitude to the ultimate. It is worth while to compare it with Wordsworth's

> No motion has she now, no force;
> She neither hears nor sees;
> Roll'd round in earth's diurnal course
> With rocks and stones and trees.

There is the same unemotional, un-"attitudinal," expression of momentous forces in precise, *scientific* language.

This comparison is all the more interesting because Mr. Hallowes opened his paper on "The New Poetry of Science" with Edmund Gosse's remark that

> The belief of Wordsworth was that the Poetry of the Future should deal in some inspired fashion with the Discoveries of Science.

For Mr. Hallowes, as for Wordsworth, this dealing is a direct dealing; but there is also the indirect treatment of "the scientific spirit" to be considered. There is that other category of poems of science which have never been suspected of containing a fundamental correlation between poetry and science because they do not outwardly express one.

After the plain statement of Wordsworth there came, not only a few equally plain "scientific" statements by Browning and Tennyson (who thought railway trains ran in grooves); but also a great body of poetry conscious of and impregnated with the spirit of contemporaneous science, yet not actually mentioning it. For instance, I doubt whether Keats would have prayed "To cease upon the

midnight without pain," in just those words, had he not been a student of medicine.

To-day, the " direct dealing " occurs fitfully in such poems as Stephen Spender's *The Pylons* :

> Now over these small hills they have built the concrete
> That trails black wire :
> The pylons, those pillars
> Bare like nude, giant girls that have no secret.

But the stock of such poems—I am dealing with major poems, not minor verses—is limited ; while the indirect illusion is widespread. For instance, there are Edwin Muir's *Variations on a Time Theme*, which could only have been written in our own age of scientific speculation, for from them emanates a philosophy which has room for all the findings, however uncomfortable, of science. There are many other examples of this—take Roy Campbell's negro studies—although most of our moderns are rather stylized in their attitude to science, twisting it to suit the convenience of social and economic ideologies. Again, D. H. Lawrence gains much from scientific and pseudo-scientific theories—and loses much.

Here we strike a danger-bell, the danger being the ease with which a poet can slip from the firm ground of established scientific fact to the slime of " scientific " theories of very doubtful integrity. We often find Lawrence pouring out the theories of charlatan psychologists and scientists in the same way as we find Balzac's interest in obscure " sciences " such as phrenology impairing the realism of his novels. Such influence of science is so subtle and slippery that the reader, having with so great difficulty touched it at all, is unable to grasp it firmly and hold it up to the light for examination. Against this sort of thing Mr. Hallowes takes a firm stand. He defines his terms clearly. He sets his science on a pedestal for all to see.

> The stone leaves of those writings which relate
> The History of the Earth—that Nature tells
> With illustrations of primeval shells,
> White drawings on a background of dark slate—
> I read, and on their records meditate,
> For streams have cut her volume's parallels

Of blackened strata, breached like citadels,
So that they are no more inviolate.

Thus, in the mountain, and the rock-strewn dale,
A Wanderer, I read our planet's tale,
And learn how Man ascended long ago—
How climbing to the sunlight from the shade
He conquered one by one each bitter foe,
Till he Creation's Masterpiece was made.

This makes it easy to criticize, as I have criticized *A Bed of Limestone* above; in exactly the same way it is easy to criticize the face value of Wordsworth. But such criticism is of only secondary value. The real importance of these poems is their austere purity from all taint of sensational charlatanism. They are a bulwark against all the insidious advances of the insincere promulgation of false sciences. We have reason to be grateful for the uncompromising plainness with which Mr. Hallowes states that:

A modern poet . . . who attempts to write the Poetry of Science, without possessing a distinct bent for science, and without first undergoing a thorough practical scientific training, must not look for success as a Poet of Science, for that requires a first-hand knowledge of Science acquired by long training and experience as well as an inborn poetical bent.

In support of these words, their author has for some years been working on a *magnum opus*, "The Evolution of the Earth and Man." Here we have the significance of the science of geology carried to its height in terms of a presupposed philosophy. We can imagine some of the difficulties of this work. The happy conciliation of the Theistic doctrine of *Genesis* and the entirely material scientific attitude to evolution will in itself be difficult—indeed it has for long vexed our generation. Then there is the problem that eventually broke down the Edwardians—I mean the dressing of new dolls in old clothes. If Mr. Hallowes does succeed in this task, his work will bear to the more stylized ramifications of such as Sacheverell Sitwell a relation which finds an obvious analogy in that of Milton's poetry to the metaphysicals. Grierson's charge that in *Paradise Lost* Milton was begging the question may be levelled at "The Evolution of the Earth and Man." The

occasional untrammelled lightnings of Vaughan and Traherne may suggest a freer conception of the universal than Milton's methodical plan. There will always be some of us who prefer the shooting sparks of the catherine-wheel to the steady glow of a candle. The sporadic genius of a Thomas (Edward), a Pound or an Auden will always be more exciting and occasionally more illuminating than the constant flame of a Hardy or Bridges.

There is that in a promise that points to the infinite. There is that in an achievement that is its own limitation.

Yet nothing can prevent an achievement from *being* an achievement. We can see it, feel it, weigh it, describe it, dissect it. It is there, tangible, as solid as a Gothic cathedral, as symphonic, as lasting. It is such an achievement that the poetry of science now seeks ; it is for the provision of such that Mr. Kenneth Hallowes is working.

JOHN ELLIOT.

THE SIN

NOW damned are they who have not fought
their battle against endless odds,
nor dreamed of victory, nor thought
that their own garden might be God's.

Thrice damned are they who have not known
this bitter world so woundy sweet
that angels might come shining down
the sunlight of the village street.

But those who've seen the starry Grail
and heard the splendid bugles blown,
and would not follow lest they fail,
and dared not turn and walk alone—

Oh, damned for twelve eternities
are they, and desperate, and lost,
who dared commit with open eyes
the sin against the Holy Ghost !

RONALD FULLER.

THIS LAND OF OURS

A Hymn to Canada

OH, Thou Great Land whose form was wrought
By that Primeval Force that we
Who share thy many riches call
"The hand of God," we honour thee—
This Canada of mine—and thine,
This land of ours.

Within thy vast Dominion we
Have shelter found, and Freemen, live
At peace with those of every race,
Who to thy laws their fealty give—
This Canada of mine—and thine,
This land of ours.

We know thee in thy angry moods,
And when thy loveliness so fills
The heart we're mute, and every sense
Is soothed as though by rippling rills,—
This Canada of mine—and thine,
This land of ours.

Thy greatest faults are those we've made
In dreaming on while others weep
And lose their trust in man and God.
Awake! It is not time to sleep
In Canada of mine—and thine,
This land of ours.

We want no Despots here to tell us
How to go, like herded sheep,
But with Ourselves—our Laws—our Country,
To keep faith—abiding—deep,
In Canada of mine—and thine,
This land of ours.

JESSICA E. MONEY.

Winnipeg.

DYNAMICS OF AMERICAN POETRY: LXXV

Vermont does not fail to give substantial evidence of her value in the family of States. Her's is a stirring history from the days of the Revolution, when Ethen Allen commanded the Green Mountain Boys. Bennington now boasts an important College and the names of many poets are associated with this State of Vermont.

Walter Hard, author of *Vermont Vintage* (Stephen Daye Press, Brattleboro, Vermont), is a native Vermonter. He knows his countryfolk very well and the characters who move through this book. Mr. Hard writes us of poetry :

> " To be honest, much of my free verse output I put in that form because it seemed best suited to my subjects. Life in Vermont is not smooth and even but is more like our mountains, rugged, uneven, not lacking in beauty—as I hope my verse is not—but certainly not set in any conventional form. When it does turn out to be metrical it is just because the subject forced it to be so. There is certainly something in Vermont that stirs one's inner being. It is partly what one sees, partly what one knows of the life of the people and of the historical background, and the basic nearness to the soil. The feeling all these things compounded demands expression. It is a sort of spontaneous combustion, as far as I am concerned. If I didn't write, I'd have to try painting. If I couldn't do either I'd just have to sit on a fence and whistle lest I burst."

It is quite impossible to quote from these graphic portraits of Mr. Hard's neighbours. " An Osculation Problem " is particularly good —it follows :

> Jed and Nettie lived on what was once the Poor Farm.
> It was still a poor farm and Jed was suited to it.
> He worked hard enough but he had little brain power
> To guide his brawn.
> Nettie wasn't much help to Jed.
> She spent much of her time
> Reading paper-covered novels full of romance.
> She lived in a world of lords and ladies.
>
> * * * * *
>
> One Saturday they had had a heated argument
> In the buggy in front of the store,
> Nettie had become so angry that she wouldn't go in.
> So Jed went in with the basket of butter and eggs
> And put it on the counter.
> The storekeeper pulled the basket toward him.
> He looked at Jed who had a whipped look.
> —*Jed, it ain't none of my business,*
> He said looking over his glasses,
> —*But why in tunkit don't yu leave that woman t' home*
> *Stid o' bringin' her along and rowin' it ev'ry Sat'day?*

Jed looked out toward the buggy with listless eyes.
—Nope. She's so damned mean an' cantankerous
I'd ruther fetch 'er along
Than kiss 'er goodbye.

Mr. Hard is the author of *Some Vermonters*, *Salt of Vermont*, *Mountain Township*, and *Vermont Vintage*—with Margaret Hard, *This is Vermont*.

Angela Marco, author of *Moon in the City*, *Faust in Spring*, *Matter and Life*, in *Fair Captive* (Stephen Daye Press, Brattleboro, Vermont) gives a colonial epic. Familiar with the poetry of Angela Marco, we are not disappointed in the valour and talent with which she tells her story. This, her first sustained narrative, is the story of an eighteenth century woman whose history is exciting and brave. True to history, the tale moves on in lively language, with the assurance of a poet who knows her characters and how to tell of them. Jemima Howe captured by the Indians during the Hinsdale raid of 1755 proved herself equal to her dramatic adventures. It is a book to open one evening, sitting by the fire, to follow through to its last line—134 pages. We meet her in the following:

Jemima Howe, born Sartwell, was of strong
And serious fibre. Like her namesake long
Ago, Job's daughter, she was beautiful.
She had borne tragedy; laborious, dull
Routine of rustic life with hardship fraught
That thinned her bright, commanding face had not
Faded her valiant spirit. She was tall;
Spun gold, her hair cascaded in its fall
And foamed around her temples. Her long limbs
She used as if their native rhythms were hymns
Of Gregory and Luther; her strong arm
So often circling some young child, had charm.
Such women loved. But that was not the whole
Of life to them; life was a crystal bowl
Brimmed with adventure—could one dare to think
How brimmed, how boiling, would she dare to drink?
Jemima Howe had lived; her close-locked lips
Told nothing. By the light of tallow dips
She read her Book of Job, read verse by verse
That splendid tale, no better and no worse
For being bound with Matthew, Mark and Luke
In one great Book—with Psalm and Pentateuch.
Jonah, the Song of Songs too, she would read;
One volume, Euclid of her code and creed.

Angela Marco says: "Poetry can explore depths, can reveal experiences of the soul at which prose baulks."

The Waxen Leaf, by Albert Brush (Wings Press, New York) brings us assurances of the gifts of this poet from Walter de la Mare and May Sinclair, Eugene O'Neill and Countee Cullen. The book needs no assurances as we dip into its pages. A sonnet (" Fugue ") follows :

When Time and I have no more intercourse
And he has left me to eternity,
There may be years when no small thought of me
Will ever come, with pleasure or remorse,
To stir your memory. Time in his course
Who steals all things, helas, will not spare thee ;
Your hair perhaps will no more honey be ;
Your laughter split, and spent your youthful force.
Time in his course will take so much away,
But in some sleepless night while counting sheep,
With rain upon the roof such as this rain,
You'll think of me—and I will live again
And living, turn ; and smile ; and sigh and sleep :
While you lie wakeful till the break of day.

And now a lyric, " A Swan Song "—

He who has heard a swan song
Nevermore can be
Quite altogether happy,
Altogether free.

Something there is that lingers
Long upon the ear
Something there is that haunts him
From year unto year.

Yet if you ask the gooseboy,
Who has heard this note,
Beginning at the castle,
Fading down the moat.

He will never say to you
He would rather not
Have listened to the swan song
Regardless of his lot.

May we not say there are writers who write to please their public. Brush is a writer, it appears, who writes to please himself but he cannot avoid giving pleasure to his readers.

" From Paul Verlaine To Lucien Letinbis " causes us to visit these distinguished two :

Do you still wander by the pool in the park ?
Do you linger by the bridge ?

Is the syringa in bloom?
Has the lilac dropped its last flower
Where the swan sails?
How many summers walked we this way?

To-night there is a shadow on the water
And a chill in the cloudless air.
We have stayed too late.
Come, let us go back to our graves!

Mr. Brush sends me the following on poetry:—

"As far as why I write poetry—there is really no excuse—someone in the nineteenth century said something about linnets singing which, if trite, is also true. As far as poetry's place in the modern world I fear that only new forms with vitality and unusualness to meet this unusual age have any real place in modern life until such times as the flow of classical and conventional poetry can well up again. But unfortunately for me I am not an Auden or an Eliot, whom I admire extravagantly, but must use the simple tools I have and eagerly adopt the advice of scorning not the sonnet. If this poets work falls on barren ground *tant pis* for the poet but sometimes the stone that was rejected by the builder, etc., etc."

ALICE HUNT BARTLETT.

A Poet of Flame

We never see the light;
Yet, lest we doubt it.
By it we see all things
Nothing without it

writes E. Merrill Root in a poem in *Dawn is Forever* (Packard, Chicago), his third and ripest book of published verse since 1929. "I Discern," writes Root in a deeply and originally conceived poem,

A flame in all things . . . many flames that burn
Smouldering, smouldering sometimes into light
(Then you are frightened, world: that flame's too white)
I see us men as flames in darkness burning
Our anguished fire to the sun returning.

In other words, this poet feels, as long as he does not raise his consciousness to this flame-like level, all gathered experience, all knowledge of facts will remain for him, in the higher sense, valueless.

In the same poem, "Letters to the World," Root speaks of "the white thunder of Beethoven"—"that Madman of the sun, Vincent Van Gogh"—and of "a sense more beyond our doors than enters any door."

Root sings of the inner-flames, yet the present world's actualities and tragedies are not ignored in his poems. It is the fashion among the intelligent, or those who think they think intelligently about

fascism, communism and Karl Marx to assume an opposition of enmity between the mystic and the scientist. But in actuality matters do not stop there. From Wordsworth, Blake, Whitman, Dickinson, Rilke, Hopkins, Rimbaud, Yeats, A.E., Housman, Lawrence, Wylie, Crane and Jeffers—whom can we name among the outstanding poets in the past or the present who is without any sense of the mystical in his work!

Root with Van Gogh believes in the miracles of nature, the miracles of flaming dawns and dark shining nights, rain and winds sweeping over ploughed fields heavy with sprouting corn :—

It is time to turn to the comrades of the sun!
And who are they?—
The corn and the poppy that answer the sun with green or red—
Frail dancers of day
That dare the running wind and the frost-toothed night
For love of the light.

Root poetry at its best is at once a forward going and a back coming; a forward going to something newly perceived; a returning to somethat has been with us since the beginning of dawn.

If the Imagists told us that poetry, their poetry must "be hard, cold, objective"—and to remain "hard, cold, objective" would be to surrender to the modern distemper in all the arts. It would be to freeze, to live in gas stations, aeroplanes, traffic jams and with machine-guns.

Root remains indifferent, rebellious against the modern temper with D. H. Lawrence and therefore finds himself like Don Quixote hurled

Against the world
By his own nobleness, to be
Men's mockery,
I will my madness—to increase
His tragic peace.

What we like in Root is that he remains as lonely, stubborn and self-tanged among our modern poets as his own symbol the skunk cabbage :

Full-bodied and buxom, and ample of mirth,
The happy skunk cabbage is vivid with earth,—
Malodorous, vulgar, impenitent, broad,—
Most tanged of the chlorophyll children of God.

In reading Root's verse we seem to see the great muddy, journalistic poetic flood far, far behind us. We realise that there is too much in modern poetry we can no longer love, no longer gather strength from; therefore we pass it by. Real poetry is always possible, even this day to reach us as profoundly, as simply as it reached the human heart in ages that are past. Despite cerebration and all the modern "isms," the green eternity of earth remains what it always was; richly sensuous, splendidly strange, superbly tragic and joyfully mad.

The simplest, the most familiar and homely things gain the strange power of spreading awe around them through Root's vision.

Man—"earth's biped question-mark" in a poem called "Will and Testament"—becomes a symbol in Blake's words of a "glorious spiritual Vegetation" to Root.

What Van Gogh said about his own pictures, can be justly said about Root's poems: "In a picture I want to say something comforting as music is comforting, I want to paint men and women with that something which the halo used to symbolize."

Root's poetry says to us; Man's body is the earth, man's spirit is the Flame imprisoned in the dark weeping clay of outer life—but man's inner life is the spark of burning flame in "the naked mind, Running for ever on the lonely hills"—The wine of love, the bitter bread of death is not lightly handled by Root in his work. His mystic but joyful wisdom, his lightning-like force of perception, his spirit drinking for ever a richer wine;—the very blood of this earth, forces us to accept him as the Dionysiac-Christian among our younger American poets. His is the poet of the flame as Van Gogh remains the superb painter of the flame of life. RUDOLPH GILBERT.

MRS. JULIA BOYNTON GREEN, Los Angeles, California, reports:—The most interesting and encouraging bit of literary news I can pass on to you is this. Of course, you know of the Huntingdon Library and Galleries at San Marino (near Pasadena). Well—this great institution, one of the most important and famous in the world, I suppose, has decided to establish as a feature of its historical section a Department of Southern California Poetry, going back to the earliest craftsmen and the beginnings of the art on this Coast. The idea originated with a dear friend of mine, Miss Beulah May of Santa Ana, herself a writer of charming and distinguished verse; and she persuaded Mr. Bynum, Librarian of the Huntington Library, to found the Department. She will co-operate with him in collecting material, the nucleus of which will be the column of verse and comment which she has been running for years in a Santa Ana paper, and she is asking me to assist in any way possible this worth-while undertaking. Of course, she wishes all my three books of verse and also some poems not included in the books, among them "After an Earthquake," which took one of the REVIEW prizes and appeared in its issue of July-August, 1927; and "A Meditation on Mirth" (January-February, 1927).

MILFORD E. SHIELDS, Durango, Colorado, wishes us "to know that I find in THE POETRY REVIEW a source of continuous poetic sustenance."

MRS. GEACH, Cardiff, assures us the September-October POETRY REVIEW is "A very good number! I especially like Dennis Birch's 'The 19— War Memorial' and Walter Burton's 'Picture of a Girl on the walls of the Cretan Labyrinth."

THE RIDDLE OF THE SONNETS

THERE are serious pitfalls for the human race in the bare fact that in the course of centuries words, or certain words, undergo serious changes in their meanings. Shakespeare, in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, makes Theseus say :

> Here Thisbe comes and her passion ends the play.

The dialogue goes on with Hippolyta's speech:

> Methinks she should not use a long one for such a Pyramus : I hope she will be brief.

" Not a long one " ; i.e. not a long speech, poem, or lamentation in verse. Again Theseus, after hearing Pyramus recite the poem that ends with :

> O Fates, come, come,
> Cut thread and thrum ;
> Quail, crush, conclude, and quell !

says:

> This passion, and the death of a dear friend, would go near to make a man look sad.

Though it was well known that " passion," in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and elsewhere, bore, for the Elizabethans, that meaning of " poem " (Matthew Roydon wrote a Passion on the death of Sidney, Watson's Passions are a hundred in number), the word as it occurs in Sonnett XX :

> A woman's face with Nature's own hand painted
> Hast thou, the master-mistress of my passion,

has borne the meaning of " sexual love " even for one as erudite as Schmidt, the German author of the Shakespeare Lexicon. So one has Samuel Butler, misleading Schmidt or misled by him or another, writing :

> Fresh from the study of the other great work in which the love that passeth the love of women is portrayed as nowhere else save in the Sonnets, I cannot but be struck with the fact that it is in the two greatest of all poets that we find this subject treated with the greatest intensity of feeling. The marvel, however, is this, that whereas the love of Achilles for Patroclus, depicted by the Greek poet, is purely English, absolutely without taint or alloy of any kind, the love of the English poet for Mr. W. H. was, though only for a short time, more Greek than English.

Though " the Butlerian theory of the Sonnets " (they are his words) is discussed by J. M. Robertson (of *The Shakespeare Canon*) in *The Problems of the Shakespeare Sonnets* (cap. VIII), Mr. Walter Thomson, the editor of *The Sonnets of William Shakespeare and Henry Wriothesley Third Earl of Southampton* (Blackwell, 12s. 6d.), begins his Preface with the words :

> The main purpose of this Monograph is : To express strong and earnest expostulation against the allegation that Shakespeare

in his Sonnets or elsewhere made confession of moral perversity : To point out the injustice done to Shakespeare by reading the 20th Sonnet in the present-day meaning of words instead of in the significance of Elizabethan parlance, . . . : To expose the hoax perpetrated by Oscar Wilde and Samuel Butler about the ' beautiful boy actor, Willie Hughes."

As for Hughes, Robertson has this :—

> That a fool and a knave, who probably was a sea-cook, of the name of William Hughes, not only bedevilled the soul of Shakespeare but was the cynosure of a number of " rival poets," is not a proposition fitted to invite examination.

Yet Robertson did examine it, and summarily dismissed it.

A later passage in Mr. Thomson's Preface reads :—

> This monograph also serves to SUGGEST for CONSIDERATION NOT TO ASSERT :
>
> that Shakespeare wrote only about one hundred of the Sonnets usually attributed to him ;
>
> that he addressed them to Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton ;
>
> that the greater number of the remainder of the Sonnets are probably from the pen of Southampton or were collected by him ;
>
> that Shakespeare had very little or no hand in the " Dark Woman " series.

Such positions can only be suggested for consideration ; they cannot be established ; for the evidence that would establish them, supposing it once to have existed, perished with Shakespeare and Southampton themselves and sundry of their contemporaries. And to say that they can only be suggested for consideration is to throw doubt upon its being worth while.

The reader of any review of Mr. Thomson's book may want most to know which are the sonnets that he attributes to pens other than Shakespeare's own, the pens of Southampton and others. They are 32, 36, 38–39, 43–45, 47–48, 50–52, 58, 59, 61–62, 72, 74, 101, 105, 109, 114, 117–118, 121–122, *plus* all the " Dark Woman " sonnets, twenty-eight in number according to Mr. Thomson's hardly explicable mode of reckoning. This is to give to some one other than Shakespeare credit for the lines :—

> Therefore are feasts so solemn and so rare,
> Since, seldom coming, in the long year set,
> Like stones of worth they thinly placèd are,
> Or captain jewels in the carcanet.
>
> . . . . .
>
> But when my glass shows me myself indeed,
> Beated and chopt with tann'd antiquity,

Mine own self-love quite contrary I read ;
Self so self-loving were iniquity.

. . . . .

No, I am that I am ; and they that level
At my abuses reckon up their own :
I may be straight, though they themselves be bevel ;
By their rank thoughts my deeds must not be shown.

. . . . .

Then can no horse with my desire keep pace ;
Therefore desire, of perfect'st love being made,
Shall neigh, no dull flesh in his fiery race ;
But love, for love, thus shall excuse my jade,—
Since from thee going he went wilful slow,
Towards thee I'll run, and give him leave to go.

To give that credit away from Shakespeare is more than any one could ever persuade me myself to do. The very last thing I propose to attempt in life is to make out that Shakespeare did not write :

Therefore desire, of perfect'st love being made,
Shall neigh, no dull flesh, in his fiery race,

(to punctuate the second line as one believes the poet, whoever he was, must have done). To make another point, can one think of any son of Adam but Shakespeare daring to put into his own mouth the words "I am that I am"? First, if with a different emphasis, they were put into the mouth of the Ancient of Days. J. A. CHAPMAN.

GOOD-MORROW, FRIEND

WHEN first I looked upon you, friend of mine,
Your strong, compelling clasp locked in my own ;
Thrilling to the touch strange chords were stirred,
And leaping into life our love was born.

A few short years together, friend of mine,
We journeyed on Life's road. How pure the joy,
Complete the understanding, deep the peace
That crowned the concord of each perfect day.

As brooding mists of nightfall, friend of mine,
Enshroud the path awhile befilled with light :
So ends earth's day. In the awful hush
I kneel o'erwhelmed and falter : "Friend, farewell!"

Farewell? If rough the pathway, friend of mine,
Inscrutable and grim Life's dumb design ;
A glorious sun flings back night's louring gloom
To bid a wondering world : "Good-morrow, friend!"

Adelaide, S. Australia. FREDERICK MYERS.

TWO CRISIS POEMS

We have good reasons for not favouring semi-topical poems but we make an exception of the following :—

SEPTEMBER 30TH, 1938, by I. SUTHERLAND GROOM :

Not Jazz to-night ! let them refill the trenches
With the piled earth ; and let the guns be taken
From the quiet roofs their noise did not awaken ;
Loosen the finger that the trigger clenches :
Wait a brief evening while the darkness quenches
Moribund fears and soothes the heart thrice shaken,
Till dark imagination has forsaken
The yet disordered mind whose thought it drenches.

Give me at least a little time for breathing
Calm, soft as dew upon a bed of balm,—
Understudy of sleep, impervious calm,
Inapprehensive, in no turmoil seething,
A day and half a day our hearts enwreathing :

Turn on the Jazz when I have sung the psalm !

TWO NATIONS (ENGLAND AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA), by M. R. DOWSON :

" If I had a golden dress
I'd put it on to-day !
For peace is born of righteousness—"
" For me, I cannot say.

" They say a robe of black despair
is fittest for the bride
The hangman trysts with overnight ;
for death is on our side.

" Happy is England ! She may wear
Her golden, glorious dress,
But blood and tears have paid the price
And bought her righteousness.

" Blood of our Country, smitten sore
Her life unto the ground.
Blood of our heart we hence outpour
That your peace may be found.

" A Saviour dying on a Tree
Breathed low His last ' Forgive ! '
If sacrifices fruitful be
We die that you may live."

POETRY AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE

"FITTING in Poetry," seems to be the aim of at least two new books of literary criticism. Martin Turnell's *Poetry and Crisis*, (Sands, 2s. 6d.) is an extremely able delineation of the Catholic's concept of modern life and the position and mission of poetry in it. The following excerpt explains the title: "The new doctrines introduced by the modern revolutions instead of leading to a new order have simply attacked the roots of traditional civilization and produced a *state of crisis*. They have reduced European unity to a welter of conflicting sects. . . . The tragedy is that modern poets are cut off from their spiritual heritage. It has unfortunately been a matter of sheer gain and sheer loss, a failure to combine what was already there with what the modern poet had to add, or what he might have added, without relinquishing his heritage." This thesis is maintained in a most scholarly manner, and is chiefly effective, in that the author shirks so little. "The Position of the Problem," such liberal critics as Middleton Murry, I. A. Richards, and F. R. Leavis, Marxist opinion and the relation of Catholicism to modern criticism are equably and intelligently dealt with. There are one or two things, however, which Mr. Turnell does shirk; which shakes the confidence of his reader a little. He speaks of testing "by eternal principles," and attempts no definition, leaving the phrase in a cloud of vague grandeur which arouses our suspicions. This and other unsatisfactory remarks in the book probably arise from the fact that he does, and indeed has to, presuppose to his argument a complete acceptance of Catholic tenets. He is at great pains to justify the application of the Catholic philosophy—he points out its naturally integral position in the life and culture of the Middle Ages—but he makes no attempt to justify the *existence* of these tenets by his "eternal principles." It may be that he is himself so good a Catholic that he feels no need to do so; but there is also the possibility that this religio-philosophical background of his contains a confusion between "eternal" and "doctrinal" principles. Such remarks as: "These experiences are happening to people who are outside the Church, and therefore to a large extent cut off from a man's common spiritual heritage," are apt to arouse resentment—they smack a little of the Pharisee's prayer. Either one accepts this attitude or one does not. If one does, then the book is an invaluable guide to an understanding of the significance of modern poetry; if one does not, in it can still be found a considerable number of disassociated but, in themselves, excellent pieces of literary criticism.

Poetry and Anarchism (Faber, 6s.) is a leisurely, personal and experienced survey by Herbert Read of the position of the arts in our time. It is not a complacent statement of the *status quo*, but an earnest appeal to the poet to retain his primitive and ideological principles and to the world to free itself from the "organized ignorance of mass movements." He acknowledges and at the same time condemns the totalitarian state's recognition of the artist and poet: "Both fascism and marxism are fully aware of the power of the poet, and because the

poet is powerful, they wish to use him for their own political purposes. The conception of the totalitarian state involves the subordination of all its elements to a central control, and not least among such elements are the aesthetic values of poetry and of the arts in general. . . . In Soviet Russia any work of art that is not simple, conventional, and conformist is denounced as 'leftist distortion.' . . . The public is the undifferentiated mass of the collectivist state, and what this public wants is what it has wanted throughout history—sentimental tunes, doggerel verse, pretty ladies on chocolate-box lids: all that which the Germans call by the forceful word *Kitsch*." This problem, found in simple terms in the collectivist state, becomes more complex when we find it in England, and is dealt with by Mr. Read in a chapter headed "Why we English have no Taste." Perhaps the key phrase is: "Puritanism provided Capitalism with a moral atmosphere within which it could develop unchecked by conscience or the rule of the Church." From this we get the subordination of the public good, the common-wealth to private good and private wealth. The individual is left by the state to stand alone and exposed to the criticisms and economic attacks of his neighbours, and in self-defence he draws round him a "shell of normality" which "admits no light"—no artistic, poetic revolution. Mr. Read's suggested solution is adequately indicated by the chapter-heading "The Necessity of Anarchism." What is more to our point is to consider the position of the arts in an anarchist state. Apparently they would have no relation to immediate concerns, nor would they be "eternal principles" nor "in the place of religion." Carried to the ultimate purity of their idealism (if that be possible), they would be the satisfaction of those subconscious elements of man's mind not attainable by any social organism—"We must surrender our minds to universal truth, but our imagination is free to dream; is as free as the dream; is the dream."

Ezra Pound, in very different terms, makes a similar attack on the public's lamentable "lack of taste" in his *Guide to Kulchur* (Faber, 10s. 6d.). Not that his attitude must be thought the same. His approval of the economic principles of totalitarian Italy, his insistence on the pre-eminence of Chinese culture (over Greek) and of Latin (over Germanic) show at any rate a marked difference in stress from Herbert Read. Against this, we find an almost exact duplication of a remark by Read quoted above (again note difference of language): "The utter paucity, falsity and vulgarity, together with sheer rascality of anglicans à la Baxter (the swine who sold his king and his church to the usurers) are beyond my vocabulary." Here again we have the opinion that Puritan state and church left the individual morally unguarded, and from this develops in the individual an incapability for artistic appreciation, "the one thing one should not do is to suppose that when something is wrong with the arts, it is wrong with the arts ONLY." But, unlike Read, he does not consider this artistic unhealthiness of the state unavoidable—he regards it as the result of a deliberate attempt by the

capitalists (whom he flatly dismisses as " usurers ") to suppress, for their own " immoral " ends, the natural revolutions of the arts. These are just dogmatic statements that carry conviction through a power largely other than intellectual. For Pound's whole reaction to " Kulchur " is rather sensory than logical. It is impossible—it would indeed be particularly futile to try—to " find a formula " for him. You have to " feel " him. It is not, of course, impossible to discuss this book; but it is impossible to deal with it adequately with our limited machinery called " literary criticism " (in the derogatory sense of the phrase). The best thing to do with it is to read it. Then, if you don't like it, throw it, or yourself, away; if you do like it, keep it alongside your seventeenth-century prose writers to dip into for richness.

J.H.E.

New and Old Poets in Verse and Prose

Miss Laura Riding has issued through Messrs. Cassell her collected poems, a bulky volume containing nearly 500 pages and costing fifteen shillings. In her preface she admits that readers find her poems " difficult," and explains that she writes for " the reasons of poetry," a phrase which she repeats frequently, but expressly refuses to explain. The book ends with a series of new poems called *The Life of the Dead*. Each, we are told, was first written in French (the French originals are given and each is accompanied by a surrealist nightmare of an illustration which, we learn, was the germ of that particular poem, conceived before the text and put on paper or canvas by a painter under Miss Riding's instructions. This is not a book to read in, say, the library of The Poetry Society. For, after half-an-hour of sifting and riddling Miss Riding's " difficult " verses, the eyes would stray to the bookshelves, and the reader would remember how much poetry there is which has stood the test of Time but which he or she has never yet read. And then, as Francesca said, " That day we read no more "—at least, not of Laura Riding. Her book can be warmly recommended to anybody who is shipwrecked on a desert island, with nothing to read.

With his *Human Lyrics* (Blackwell, 2s. 6d.) Mr. Harrold Johnson completes the Octave of volumes of lyrics which he has been working at for forty years. The whole will shortly be republished in one volume to be entitled *The Voice of One*.

He again proves his appreciation of natural beauty and, as usual, he writes musically. Indeed, some of his lyrics might attract composers. His lines, unfortunately, too often suggest that he took without search, the first rhyme (e.g., " trees—" breeze ") that came to hand, the result being either flat and common-place, or else pointless. For one who has been writing so long he occasionally shows strange technical lapses. The rhyming of " calm " and " harm " will not shock some ears, though to many more sensitive Londoners it is as unpleasant as the dropping of that unobtrusive but very present sound, the initial

aspirate. But every beginner in verse learns that to rhyme two words which, though quite different in meaning, such as "grave," the adjective, and "grave," a burial-place, sound exactly alike, is utterly forbidden. Yet Mr. Johnson is capable of rhyming "aloud" with "allowed." The notice in these pages of a former book mentions his rhyming "thyme" with "time."

Dallas Kenmare is well known to readers of THE POETRY REVIEW as a sensitive and discerning lover and critic of poetry and her new volume of poems, (*Farewell to Trees*, Williams and Norgate, 1s. 6d.), will advance her reputation as a poet. The title-poem, telling her wistful sorrow that sailing for America means parting from her English trees appeared in these pages. It is a pity that she did not impose upon herself the rigid discipline of regular form and thereby make memorable her touches of imagination. She has preferred to express herself in very free verse. It is easier to remember a hymn than a psalm, though the psalm is generally the finer poetry. Her beloved trees show year after year, century after century, the same familiar form and pattern, with only restricted freedom of movement and irregular growth. But her change in technique and breadth of content may lead to individual development, marking a definite and not abrupt stage in the evolution of a poet who has perception, expression and earnestness.

South Africa has got its accomplished epic and lyric poet in Francis Carey Slater, who blends his unique knowledge of the Southern continent with splendid literary artistry in *The Trek* (Macmillan, 4s. 6d.) a really national narrative poem dealing with the central event in South African history, the Great Trek, for which centenary celebrations are to be held throughout South Africa in December. The story of the day-to-day life of the Voor-trekkers,—the incredible things that they actually accomplished with ox-waggons, their political and religious dissensions, the fierce fighting of "the heroes who gave their lives to save their soil,"—is told with straightforward, vivid simplicity, fitting for the epic of a simple people who, as the author says, "in their courage, endurance and self-sacrifice touched the sublime," the narrative part being written in rhymed decasyllabic verse, broken by many and varied lyrics in appropriate metres. We hope this remarkable achievement will be widely read, publicly as well as privately, during the centenary celebrations, of which it will probably remain the finest as well as the most permanent commemoration.

I Saw the World contains sixty poems from Walther von der Vogelweide, set into English verse from the mediæval German by Ian G. Colvin (Edward Arnold, 5s.)—remarkably modern, as so much old poetry is found to be, discounting the claims of our own modernists to be "original" in either outlook or treatment. When the voice of

Blondel discovered Richard Cœur-de-Lion fretting in captivity, Walter von der Vogelweide was in the service of Duke Leopold VI of Austria, and much of his life was spent in travelling from court to court, composing his songs and singing them before new lords, good and bad. But he was not content, like other minstrels, with the conventional songs " to his mistress' eyebrow " and plaints of love's unfulfilled cravings. He began to break the rules of minnesong, threw a commanding gaze over the Europe of this time, and turned his fiery spirit to tempestuous political journalism in verse, bespattering with irony and abuse rival rulers and the Pope, whom he saw to be dividing Europe inexorably into two armed camps. But even in these poems, as in his lyrics, the vocabulary is pure, unburdened with adjectives, lucid, compact—the bare beauty of early Gothic. The translator's renderings are sensitive and vivid, covering a wide range, and piecing together the life of the great poet and lovable man, to whom we can still turn for the freshness of his thoughts, for his natural love of humanity and courage,—essentially " the poet of every man," whose sayings are still on the lips of Germans and on whose monument in Wurzburg the National Socialist Movement has laid its largest wreath.

Clarity and earnestness are happily welded in the poems of Winsome Zohrab. " . . . And Then the Dawn " (*Poetry of To-day*, 2s. 6d.) is a significant title because Mrs. Zohrab looks on " This Modernism " and " the fool who writes for writing's sake " with distaste but with belief in a better future, for :

> . . . though his name remain unsung,
> the poet knows the Breath of God
> may perfume thoughts materialized
> until they speak to men, not of
> an artificial age, but Him.

She can write with humour too, as in " Domestic Bliss " and " La Belle Paris," and movingly in " My Loved One Lies in Distant Clime":

> My loved one lies in distant clime
> beneath a weeping tree,
> and I am here, alone in Time,
> She, in Eternity.
>
> I hear the silver church bells chime
> across the frosted snow,
> and I grow old alone in Time,
> while seasons come and go.
>
> And I am lonely now
> while birds sing on the tree.
> The raindrops glisten on the bough
> and tears are blinding me.

Very witty and full of clever puns are the fifty verses in *Birdsworth* by Donald Hughes (Blackwell, 5s.). He has been aided and abetted

admirably in his fun by Kit Gunton with an equal number of drawings. "The Vulture" is a "tasty" sample. Mr. Hughes will be remembered as a collaborator in *Songs of the Ship and Castle*, that pleasing small anthology brought out for several years now by a keen little group of poets at Bristol.

> One thing about the vulture may be said—
> He loves you even after you are dead.
>
> If, climbing on the Caucasus, you slip
> and drop ten thousand feet, vultures will dip
> And look alive for food. You, whom they spot,
> No longer look alive—because you're not!
> In laying down your life you're doing good
> To vultures, for they thrive on high-class food.
> They waste no time. Some might account them hasty.
> Carcases in the Caucasus are tasty!

Devon and Sussex have never lacked their poets, even if they owe a good deal of their county consciousness to Newbolt and Kipling. The *Painted Meadows* of Stanley Stokes (Foulis 3s. 6d.) belong to Devon, and he writes of them in his nostalgia with much charm of description and of fancy, though without perhaps touching the deeper note of imagination. The wistfulness of many of the poems can be felt in "Dilemma":

> Oh! I would go adventuring,
> Who am of Devon born,
> For fever frets repose at night,
> Begets unrest at morn.
> The glamour of gay London Town,
> The sunlit glint of seas,
> Stirs, in this Devon-bred heart of mine,
> A thousand ecstasies.
>
> And now and again I pack my bag—
> But ne'er decide to go!
> For ever and anon I pause,
> For hurt I'll surely know
> If, fastly sworn to an orchard fair,
> Or Dartmoor's charm at eve,
> Or the queer particular lure of a lane,
> My soul I'll have to leave.

The sincerity underlying the poems of May Helen Hill in *Freedom and Other Poems* (Warne, 3s. 6d.) is not to be doubted, but their success as poetry is less assured. While the thoughts and emotions are pleasing in themselves, their handling and treatment weakens rather than

strengthens them, yet the stanza from "Fire and War" presses a question much asked to-day:

Fanned by base greed and hatred,
War clouds break o'er lovely lands.
The flower of youth and warriors
Go forth in their loyal bands.
And many Death swallows up,
While many for life are maimed.
Except the wrath of Heaven,
What, has been surely gained?

There are satisfying qualities of beauty and strength in the work of Norman Cross, whose *Collected Poems* (Favil Press, 5s.) has been published posthumously. These are especially noticeable in the short verse dramas, and poems on music and musicians, which are written in a language of dignity and power. The entire output of any writer, however, even of a major poet, is a severe test of its permanence, and, though that of Mr. Cross stands the strain well, one is tempted to think that a selected edition, like the admirable Augustan Books of English Poetry published by Benn, set a minor poet in a better niche of appreciation and memory. "The Vow" is one of the many fine lyrics:

Thou hast laid thy chains on the flood,
Thou hast set thy curb on the sea,
And thy bow in heaven has understood
No more the wrack shall be.

Thou guard'st the wells of the moon,
And the fountains of the sky,
That not of thine anger late or soon
A race of men shall die.

And thy storms rise up, and roar,
And wet winds gather again;
But the clouds that carried a curse before,
Drop . . . drop . . . in gentle rain.

Another posthumous volume of unusual beauty is Helen Foley's *Poems* (Dent, 6s.). Here the early poems are set against the maturer poetry of experience and craftsmanship, with a gap of sixteen "dry" years between them. But is there more than a difference of workmanship and angle of view in these two moving poems with old age as their theme—one from each group?

You tread upon the leaves death shed,
A staff clasped in your withered hands,
White birds are wheeling overhead—
You ever wander with them to the warmer lands,

Wet are your feet with evening dew,
You move out of the sun's low ray,
And hear faint voices calling you
Like a sea-shell singing in your ear far away.

And ever to your goal you go
With patient step, head bent and hoary,
The eternal waters shine below—
Their light is in your eyes but these are dimmed with glory.

* * *

We lose our lives by inches, thus I grieve
For working days when Spring peeped through the door
And fled pursued by summer, but mourn more
For English fields I never meant to leave
And friends no pang of sorrow can retrieve,
Now missed but once neglected, and deplore
The books unread, the wisdom left in store
And all the verses I shall never weave.

Now youth strides off without a backward glance
Or last handshake. Be off then, join the rest!
But leave me love; let love alone advance
To steer and light me to the river's edge.
Then age shall be received an honoured guest
And death awaited like a privilege.

Early and good poems are not so rare as we are apt to think. *Songs of Inexperience* (3s. 6d.) is an anthology compiled from a twenty years' output of a literary society in St. Leonard's School, St. Andrews. The poems are good enough to make an appeal to those unconnected with the school, and one wishes that other schools would foster the love of poetry in the same way. Writing of this quality is not done without an enthusiasm for poetry and the development of critical appreciation and discernment. "Adventure" by M. H. Wilson must suffice as a sampler:

Men come like moths to my candle flame for burning.
Bold spirits these, that find the open door
And venture in, their own destruction learning
Yet to seek to die in light, and ask no more.

And others also fain would enter in,
But access to my house they cannot win,
Their spirits flutter on my window pane,
Vanish in darkness, and are lost again.

This year's title for the Newdigate Poem, "The Man in the Moon," gave wide scope for variety in concept and treatment. Miss Margaret

Stanley-Wrench, the prize-winner, gives it firm handling in a living idiom compact with observation and imagination. Her style has something of the persuasive didactism of " The Land " (only she treats fallacy, legend and fact with equal assurance) and something of the architecture of Dorothy Wellesley's " Genesis " with its parallel lines of development. These are worthy and perhaps unconsciously derivative qualities, but the poem has also a strong individuality and a convincing reasonableness of its own. This passage is on the moon's influence on man :

> For, though the moon lean fertile and most lovely
> Towards the still, desiring earth,
> Yet must the man beware, who sleeps beneath
> Her cool deluding light. Mad dreams and restless thoughts
> Shall ruffle his calm mind, and in his waking
> He walks disturbed and haunted all the day
> By the sick memory of the dream . . .
> . . . Whilst those who rave in madness
> Stir restlessly as moonlight strikes their cells,
> Or call aloud to her, who turned their delicate minds
> From balanced, cool intricacy of thought
> To turbid, crafty, sick, numbed impotence.
> She, too, who moves the sea, moves the fine thread
> Of a man's understanding.

Readers who have received pleasure from the verses of Amber Lloyd which have occasionally appeared here will be interested to know that her *Collected Poems* (Stockwell, 5s.) have now been published. She is a devoted worshipper of the beauties of Nature, one who, like a painter gifted with understanding eyes, can with a stroke or two reveal what we had never noticed before. And she writes musically : very rarely does a line halt. Here are two characteristic touches

> " And poplars fling their shadows prone,
> Like Moslems at the rising sun."

> " I gazed on stubble-fields at eventide
> Where sheaves had knelt with low-bowed heads to pray
> Sun-worshipping."

Her publishers quote words of high praise of her previous volumes from papers such as *The Morning Post*, *The Times Literary Supplement*, *The Weekly Scotsman*, not to mention this REVIEW. And yet the anthologists have overlooked her. Compiling an anthology of contemporary poetry must be a Herculean labour—involving, incidentally, wading through Augean stables. One anthologist claims to have read a thousand volumes. Another is alleged by the wags to have equipped himself more easily for the task by asking a bookseller, " Who are the best contemporary poets, apart, of course, from myself ? " One way of attracting attention in a crowded market-place is to wave a red flag

and spout raucously. It gathers an audience of sorts, though only a small one. The delicate, fanciful art of Amber Lloyd does not fit her for such antics.

The unceasing outflow of anthologies—at least half a dozen have appeared this season—proves that a strong interest in poetry survives. No publisher caters for a market that does not exist. Mr. Kenneth Muir's *English Poetry, a Students' Anthology* (Oxford Press : Humphrey Milford, 5s.), is compiled on a novel plan. Its aim is " to develop the reader's understanding of what English poetry is, and to increase his sensibility to all kinds of poetic expression. The result is not an album of beauties, but a book with a continuous thread of purpose running through it." It is accordingly in seven sections, Sacred and Profane Love, Sonnets, Satire, Dramatic Verse, etc. The book, which was prepared for The Society for Teachers of English, is an interesting and useful experiment.

Cassell's Anthology of English Poetry (Cassell, 6s.), compiled by Margaret and Desmond Flower, is one of the most satisfying anthologies that have been issued. It ranges from Chaucer to the present day, and offers a balanced selection of the poetry of this century that has a particular value and might be issued as a separate part. Of course, every reader of this or any anthology will sometimes wonder why this or that poem was included and why this or that poet is omitted. It is a pity that the editors in giving more than a score of quatrains from FitzGerald's *Omar* have ignored, or been ignorant of, the fourth and final version which is a third longer and contains some of the finest and most typical quatrains. No one knows FitzGerald's *Omar* who has read only the first version.

In the September–October issue THE POETRY REVIEW noticed very favourably Mr. Norman Callan's *Poetry in Practice, a case for the progressive study of Poetry in schools.* Similar commendation can be given to *Poetry and the Ordinary Reader* (Dent, 3s. 6d.) by Mr. M. R. Ridley, who is Tutor in English Literature at Balliol College and also editor of the New Temple Shakespeare. It is a suggestive and attractive book that will be of value to those who are moved to try their hand at verse-writing, and will give new pleasure to old lovers of poetry. For instance, Mr. Ridley, premising that knowledge of how a Beethoven Sonata or a Prelude by Wagner arose, step by step, into immortal grandeur does not in the least impair our appreciation of the glorious music, shows us analytically why certain poems by (e.g.) Shelley and Keats so fascinatingly haunt the ear. And several times he takes us into the poet's workshop, and reveals how Milton, Keats, Browning, Flecker, by trial and error, by rejection of first thoughts and second thoughts, arrived at perfection. This is a book by a master-craftsman, and poetry-lovers who buy it—it costs only 3s. 6d.—will not regret their spending.

Tuscan Spring by James Cleugh (Collins, 8s. 6d.) is a magnificent reproduction of the great days of Florence, written round the life-work of the ex-goldsmith Filipepi, commonly known as Botticelli, the apprentice of the jovial Fra Lippo Lippi and familiar friend of Leonardo da Vinci—the painter who wrote poetry with his brushes and who added glory to the golden days of the Medici by the creation of that beauty which lives for ever in his *Spring* and *Birth of Venus*, in which he immortalized his adoration for Simonette Vespucci and Giovanna Tornabuorni. With the very human motives and aspirations influencing his creative work before and after the passing of his Medici patrons, are presented sympathetically Botticelli's reactions to the subsequent stormy events, and particularly the fiery influence of Savonarola, the malign influences of Machiavelli and Cesare Borgia, and the growing influence of a new school of artists, particularly of Michelangelo, vividly described in a beautifully-written story, ending with his mystic dying prayer to the spirit who had been his constant deepest inspiration :—

"Golden mistress, I have failed to set you in the hearts of men. They remain as they were, as you met them upon earth. A greater than I must arise to lead them to your throne, built, to last for ever, from their broken dreams. I heard you, in truth, speak the Sibyl's Word that Dante Alighieri sought. But when I echoed it no man, not I myself, heard it a second time. Nor do I hear it now. Yet failure to understand or to persuade oneself or others is not failure to believe. My faith in you, my faith in a Venus that the Greeks were too young in love to know, and my faith in a Mary that the Christians are too old in sorrow to imagine, does not falter. You are the truth, glorious in all the horror and misery, noble in all the meanness and cruelty of life. You have been and you will always be, whether men continue their folly or grow unendingly wise.

"Homer and Plato and Apelles, Dante, Lorenzo and Savonarola, knew you in their degrees. I knew you in your fullness. It is easy to see why they failed to make you queen of all the earth. I have no such excuse. I do not ask your forgiveness; for I know I have it. You are infinitely compassionate with all your lovers, both those who see but a part of you, and show all that part in clear fire, and those who see the whole, yet communicate but a sweet twilight, a chiarascuro, like Leonardo's, such as is made now upon your quiet grave, this latest day."

Just as whoever is going, or has been, to Florence should read Mr. Cleugh's brilliant description of the people and scenes associated with the fascinating history of the brilliant "city of flowers," so all who intend at this late hour to begin the study of Wordsworth, and all who are already acquainted with him in his most serious moods, should read *William and Dorothy* (Collins, 8s. 6d.), in which Helen Ashton gives life to the literary friendships of the Wordsworths and their own intimate association, developing in particular Dorothy's sup-

pressed love for the wayward Coleridge. Dorothy, in fact, is the long-suffering heroine of the story. Neither Wordsworth nor Coleridge are attractive characters, the former in particular, as we have judged from the Journals already, being morose, selfish and very grudging, especially when the fame of others came into competition with his own. Very typical of this is Miss Ashton's description of the Wordsworths' encounter with Coleridge at Highgate after the long breach :

" They talked of how green it would be in summer and Coleridge told them of his daily promenade under the elm-trees in the Grove and his walks upon the Heath. He said, ' I met a young man last summer, in a lane near here, a loose, slack youth, not well dressed, a poet, it seems. He was walking with a surgeon from Guy's Hospital, a Mr. Green, a friend of Gillman's ; he was introduced to me by the name of John Keats.' William knew of this young man and said so. ' A red-headed Cockney apothecary, I met him at an evening party, a year or two back. He read me some verses to Pan, a pretty piece of paganism and sent me a volume of his poems, but I have never cut the pages. I cannot be plagued with these beginners. I have too much trouble with my eyesight nowadays to read any verses except my own.' He had assumed a sour disapproving look, it was a fact that he disliked to hear of any rising poet who might supplant him.

"Dorothy remembered the nightingales in their happier days at Alfoxden, but Coleridge had forgotten them, adding ' A poet should die young, like John Keats, for when he grows old he loses the trick of singing.' Very characteristic, too, of Dorothy's long, tortured fidelity is her comment, to herself: ' Yes, he has forgotten our nightingales. We were all young together when we heard them sing, the sky was not tall enough for us to walk under ; we had a fire in our hearts. It is ashes now, all over and done with, nothing left except a rhyme that we three wrote together, about an old sailor, in the careless days when we were young.' The autumn wind seemed to chill her to the very heart. She stared about her with her wild eyes and thought distractedly, ' My youth . . . my lovely youth, where has it gone ? I shall never hear my nightingales again.'

"A proverb came into her head from nowhere, a Spanish by-word, Robert Southey had told it to her once and now she said it aloud, glancing at the naked trees, ' There are no birds in last year's nest '."

Wordsworth's domestic life, his children, his friends, and his laboured devotion to the Muse, are amply and faithfully dealt with, chiefly by way of paraphrase and extracts from the Journals, with vivid descriptions of the year's round in the West-country and the Lake district, the whole making a narrative that is at once fascinating, realistic and convincing.

The poet as novelist is shown to good effect in *Doctor Dido* by F. L. Lucas, (Cassell and Co., Ltd., 7s. 6d.), who brings a profound know-

ledge of life and letters to bear upon a sub-acid description of university life in Cambridge during the French revolutionary period, relieved by a charming love episode which, before its tragic denouement, gives Dr. Samuel Plampin, Reader in Hebrew and Vicar of Babraham, an opportunity of living a fuller, more genial life, not only in his East-Anglian vicarage, but in Paris during the temporary peace. The fall of the forsaken Dido was too great a catastrophe. " The dreadful fatality of passion, its inhuman indifference, once its tide has turned, to all that the most devoted adoration, the wildest heroism can ever do to turn it back again, crushed him down like the Calvinist who feels that God's fore-ordinance doomed him, long before earth's creation, to writhe henceforth rejected on the iron floor of Hell. Suddenly he remembered poor Cowper, with that cry from Heaven ringing for ever in his ears : " Actum est de te. Periisti." Afterwards, in Cambridge, Dr. Plampin found a pen is but a poor weapon to kill time with, and his master, Lucretius, powerless to help him when Aphrodite Pandemos, Venus Volgivaga had turned her face from him, as steadfastly as, years before, he had turned away from her. Perhaps Mr. Lucas had some reason for making those later days in erudite, but unsatisfactory and uneasy Cambridge society, so very heavy and stupid, harsh and unrelieved, more depressing than the Napoleonic wantage and more haunting than a Greek tragedy.

Mr. John Pudney, whose work in poetry has arrested attention and provoked criticism, has now emerged as a novelist with a realistic story of Soho that is remarkably faithful to the noisy, crowded, huckstering life of that area—*Jacobson's Ladder* (Longmans, 7s. 6d.). Yet it is not sordid—rather, idealism prevails over realism. A conscious upward urge and prophetic vision, however distorted, animate the queer characters, however crooked.

In *Dead Ned* (Heinemann, 7s. 6d.) Mr. John Masefield apparently set out to do a big novel of character and fate similar to *Alexanderplatz*, but turned his back on the big canvas—or, rather, has been content with a short first part and the promise of a second that may be more illuminating and exciting. The narrator gets into quite unnecessary trouble and suffering without any apparent justification, except for the frequent hint that he is actually a Jonah, always prepared to stand and contemplate a " but " and an " if,"—" if I had taken the warning, how different my life would have been," . . . " that was the beginning of my acquaintance with Admiral Topsle Cringle, but for whom my life would have been different indeed." . . . " I was happy, busy and interested—a little bit above my years, perhaps, but still, on the whole, compared with what was soon to come, in a state of blissful happiness." . . . etc., etc. He also seems to leave too many loose ends in his narrative. We are frequently told about the Admiral's hoard of gold and speculations are rife as to the old man's will, but we never

hear as to whether the hoard was found after his death, or who was the Admiral's heir, nor do we learn who killed the Admiral, an incident which is the crux of the present short novel.

In *Walt Whitman's Pose* (Harrap, 15s.) Esther Shephard is necessarily unpleasant and disillusioning in her exhaustive and reiterated exposure of the hidden source of the poet's inspiration. "He was willing enough to say what his inspiration was *not* but not what it *was*, except to fall back on nature, the Bible, Homer, Walter Scott, Broadway and his Quaker ancestry. . . . His pose as a poet, derived from his [secret] identification of himself in America with George Sand's idealization of the greatest poet, was superimposed on the solid basis of his phrenology and both combined to make his romanticized rôle as 'wound-dresser' in the Civil War a natural one. Artful and egotistic as he was, he was able to make the duties that he took up pleasant and finally profitable to himself and his reputation. . . . Uttering his repeated swan-songs, writing anonymous laudatory notices of himself [some of which Miss Shephard reproduces] and making provision for what he termed his 'future fame,' forced to resort to lies, subterfuges, and denials, mortally afraid, as it is said, in his last days, of the notebooks of his friends, he was able to keep up his pose to the last. . . . My conjecture as to the reason for Whitman's furtiveness is that he thought, in order to gain a reputation as a great and immortal poet, that he must be 'original.' It would never have done to acknowledge a literary source. For years he had preached in *his editorials with religious fervour that American literature must be* independent of European literature. . . . America was the land of destiny. While Whitman could admire France and could address poems to her, it would never have done to acknowledge that America's First Distinctive Poem, *Leaves of Grass*, had its roots in a French book," [George Sand's *Countess of Rudolstadt*.] Yet "lovers of poetry have long treasured *Leaves of Grass* and will probably long continue to treasure it. In Whitman's cadences have been exemplified interesting and, in a sense, 'new' patterns for verse. His poetry has exerted a freshening influence on modern American poetry. . . . A very few of the pieces are fine poems in their own right: if they are not of the highest quality as art, they are nevertheless of the 'natural' stuff of poetry. Not a few individual lines in *Leaves of Gross* are startlingly 'true' and real." "But the expression in Whitman's poetry of ideals of democracy and universal brotherhood, when not to be dismissed as nonsense growing out of his pathological adhesiveness, turns out, upon examination, to be the prosaic reiteration of the two statements, 'I accept all' and 'Give him my love,' which were the two basic ideas that he borrowed for his pose as 'the greatest poet' and which he never seems, either as a man or as an artist, to have made really his own."

The volume is almost overwhelmingly documented.

In *The Old Century* (Faber, 8s. 6d.), Mr. Siegfried Sassoon charms his

reader by the same self-analytical candour and modest, dispassionate admission of mixed thoughts and instincts, that distinguished *The Memoirs of an Infantry Officer*. His early days in a Kentish country house were happy ones, and are pleasantly reviewed in retrospect, without morbidity or the exasperating egoism that spoil many similar books. As a small boy, Siegfried vaguely believed he was going to be a poet, and had taken to reading Longfellow, Shelley and Tennyson, but was rather secretive about it, feeling, very properly, that poetry was a thing he wanted to keep to himself. A gradual, unforced, in fact, rather hesitant, development follows, down to his Marlborough days, (interrupted by bad health), and the publication of his first poem in *Cricket* and of his first book of verse, printed by the Athenaeum Press, in his twenty-first year, just after failing to carry off the Chancellor's Medal at Cambridge, where he had not been a success, the beautifully-monotonous word-music of William Morris and the intoxicating rhythms of *Atalanta in Calydon* getting between the young scholar and his law and history tripos reading. " My main trouble as a student of history was that I wanted it to be more like Stanley Weyman's novels or Shakespeare's plays. I had but a feeble grasp of constructive elements and political interworkings. . . . All my subsequent experience has shown that I have a brain which is only active in episodic bursts of energy. Unmethodical through lack of training and by temperament, I had always been a slow and groping learner, and when confronted by a mass of text-book information I became helpless and unintelligent, and my brain rebelled against being loaded up with knowledge which I felt could be of no possible use to it. If I couldn't be an imaginative writer, I thought, I would rather be a ploughman—or at any rate watch other people ploughing, and write poems about it."

In *Roumanian Journey* (a splendidly illustrated Batsford book, 8s. 6d.), Mr. Sacheverell Sitwell describes, after four weeks spent in the country, the most picturesque elements of the country that is the Eastern outpost of Europe, his general theme being that " what is permanent and unforgettable in Roumania is the great plain of Transylvania, the woods of Oltenia, the swamps of the Danube Delta, the valleys of the Neamt, painted Sucevita and Voronet, and the wooden houses and gay costumes seen upon its roads." At the moment it is pertinent to quote Mr. Sitwell's tribute to the peasants, who " have come down, unspoilt and uncontaminated by the Industrial Age, of which, indeed, there is hardly a trace to be seen. Greater Roumania has a steadily growing patriotic sense in which the minority populations, with hardly an exception are prepared to play their part. There will, before long, be twenty millions inhabiting this country and, slowly and gradually, their general personality is beginning to emerge. They are, ethnographically, a Latin race, and this makes them different from their neighbours. It may be worth pointing out, here, that the acceptance, after the heroic age of Stephen the Great and Michael the

Brave, of Turkish suzerainty by the Princes of Moldavia and Wallachia, has had to its credit the result that the political, ethnical, and religious entities of the two principalities survived through three centuries of wars between the three great neighbouring empires, Russia, Austria, Turkey; and that the two principalities, Moldavia and Wallachia, were never annexed by Turkey, as were, for centuries, Serbia and Bulgaria, and, even, for more than one hundred and fifty years between the two battles of Mohacz, as was the greater part of Hungary. The independent, national style of Roumania appears in such buildings as the convent of Hurez and, of course, in the painted churches of the Bucovina. These are still more interesting; in fact, they are the chief contribution of Roumania to aesthetics, and take a high place in the world of Byzantine art to which, in principle, they belong."

Miss Edith Finch has provided the first full biography of Wilfred Scawen Blunt (Cape, 15s.), the eccentric, romantic poet, politician, traveller, keen lover of life, and aristocratic rebel, who inherited the spirit of Shelley and Byron, and whose wife was Byron's grand-daughter, with whom he travelled in the wilds of Arabia, collecting the superb horses with which they started the Crabbet Arabian stud. Naturally, Miss Finch has a wealth of very varied material, which she has skilfully used and admirably documented. Mr. Blunt's literary activities are adequately dealt with, and his poems, particularly the arresting *Love Sonnets of Proteus*, receive considerable and sympathetic consideration.

A feature of Blunt's career was his warm friendships, as well as his sometimes outrageous antagonisms. A " new friendship made in the year of the publication of *Satan Absolved* which continued to the end of Blunt's life was with Lady Margaret Sackville who visited him at Fernycroft. It was in great measure owing to his influence that she began at this time to write verse, and to his encouragement that she published years later her ' really admirable ' volume of anti-war poems and, in 1919, the *Selected Poems* for which Blunt contributed a preface." He wrote many poems to her, some of them now published among his *Later Sonnets*, such as :

> What price, child, shall I pay for your bright eyes
> (How large a debt !) the light they shed on me ?
> —Nay, I can pay naught . . .
> Yet be my wealth yours, joys that fools deny,
> Knowledge of life, love, power as presbyter,
> The wit to teach youth's zeal to use its wings.

Fred. G. Webb in *Sun and Shadow* (Heath Bros., 2s. 6d.), has collected his diversified verse on many subjects, and in many manners—gay and grave, jovial and solemn—including some witty contributions to *Punch*, making altogether a very readable hand-book of poems, serious, humorous and with an individual quirk.

THE POETS' FELLOWSHIP:

THE PREMIUM EDITOR'S REPORT

Like everything else, our Competition has been affected by the international crisis. The number of contributors fell off considerably, though not very heavily. It is very pleasing to welcome to our list of successes Mrs. Iërne Ormsby and Mr. Reginald Eva, both of whom have been very consistent contributors. Miss Sutherland Groom submitted a fine poem "*September 30th*, 1938."

The awards are as follows:—Iërne Ormsby, Thurgoland; I. Sutherland Groom, Bristol; A. M. Walker, Southport; Reginald Eva, Hove.

Amongst those "Highly Commended" especial mention must be made of Pauline Huthwaite.

Highly Commended:

E. Radcliffe Binnington, Louth;
T. E. Casson, Ulverston;
Albert E. Dewey, London, W.;
Geoffrey Dobbs, London, W.C.;
E. F. A. Geach, Penylan;
Pauline Huthwaite, Hawksworth;
T. Pittaway, Frome;
D. B. Reade, Tettenhall;
Bertha Skeat, Bexhill;
Brenda F. Skene, London, W.;
Arthur Lynnford-Smith, Wanstead;
Margery Smith, Nottingham;
E. M. Walker, Ripon.

Commended:

Lilian Bird, Kettering;
Langford Budville, Worthing;
Enid I. Carter, Hassocks;
E. B. W. Chappelow, Blackheath;
Alice E. Collinge, Harwood;
Muriel Crighton, Chester;
O. C. Dargan, London, N.;
M. R. Dowson, Margate;
Redcliffe McKie, Hove;
Enid W. Mark, S. Croydon;
Oswald Middleton, Leeds;
M. E. Mitchell, London, N.W.;
Frances Paul, Chelsea, S.W.;
Harriet Plimpton, Philadelphia;
Hilda M. Slade, Ramsgate;
H. B. Tasker, Hendon, N.W.;
Elise Fellows White, Skowhegan, U.S.A.;
H. M. Wilson, Bir Zeit, Palestine.

The usual premium offer for the best poem or poems submitted to the Premium Editor during the month (without limitation of subject) is continued. Not more than four lyrics or one long poem should be submitted. MSS. should reach "The Premium Editor, The Poetry Review, 36 Russell Square, London, W.C.1," by December 1st, accompanied by stamped addressed envelope, and if criticism is desired, 2s. 6d. (For a more detailed postal criticism, 5s. should be sent.) It is essential that entrants to this competition be members of The Poetry Society or registered subscribers to The Poetry Review, and that each poem bears the name and address of the author.

A "Tea and Talk" meeting of the Poets' Fellowship will be held at 36 Russell Square, W.C.1, on Saturday, November 12th, at 3.30 p.m.

Tickets (1s. 6d. or two for 2s. 6d.) must be applied for by November 11th. Mr. Norman Callan, author of *Poetry in Practice* (Lindsay Drummond), will initiate a discussion.

The June number of the Paris *Revue de L'Enseignement des Langues Vivantes*, now in its 55th year, gave a lengthy appreciation to "Un Poète prédestiné: David Fridlander," in the course of which our contributor, who up to his 20th year was absorbed in scientific studies, particularly in microscopy, is recognized as being "de ces artistes contemplatifs qui se concentrent dans leur vision intérieure et vivent d'une vie spirituelle intense, un peu à l'écart du monde, préférant la méditation solitaire et le recueillement à l'agitation et la réclame, de sorte que leur talent n'est souvent reconnu qu'avec le temps. Il n'a pas eu l'impatience de faire connaître son nom, malgré la précocité de ses dons naturels. Il ne s'est pas élancé éperdument à la poursuite de la renommée dans un domaine spécial; il a suivi le penchant naturel de ses goûts, et son esprit assoiffé de vérité aussi bien littéraire que scientifique ou artistique a été largement cultivé."

Mr. Fridlander's first book on his friend for seventeen years, *Mathew Maris*, is examined as leading to the development of his following work in poetry, illustrated particularly by "A Wanderer's Harvest," many apt quotations of poems illustrating an idealistic reaction against modern materialism.

Kathleen Evelyn Fuller, of Leamington Spa, aptly upbraids My Children:

My children never stand alone
Financial flops they are, I own
They cannot earn a penny piece
And yet my efforts do not cease.
I toil that they success may know
I slave to fit them out to go.
When, all too soon, they reappear
A stoic smile I've learnt to wear
With unshed tears my eyelids smart
Their failures nearly break my heart.
Where are they wrong? What do they lack?
My Poor M.S.S. That All Comes Back.

Arthur Hood Chastises the Feeble Muse: A poem quoted in the September number of The Poetry Review concludes with these lines,

And since my Muse disdains to prompt my lute
And magnify the earth's rewakening,
I must perforce obey her and be mute,
And let the thrushes and the blackbirds sing
The songs I may not sing about the Spring.

And this Muse the author terms "Recalcitrant." I, for one, am

unspeakably thankful to the lady. For it is no small addition to the weariness of the world that so large a number of verse-writers feel it incumbent upon them to flog up lines to Spring, Autumn, Roses, Lilies, Trees, Sunsets or moonlit nights, or, which is even more depressing, to some imaginary grief. In this last offence the very young persons (generally females) are the worst offenders. They wail in print that some irredeemable sorrow has fallen on their souls and intimate how tenderly they intend to cherish it; which, to say the least, is extremely improbable: for any payment from an obliging editor will immediately afford them complacent comfort.

And as to Roses! how ineffably tedious are the effusions (in most cases) to these much enduring flowers. If they are crimson they invariably suggest Love's bleeding heart and they always dramatically shed their petals as Love dies; if they are White Roses they are uniformly termed "pale maidens," or "cloistered Nuns" or "fair virgins"; but as all healthy rose bushes bear seeds this virginity seems somewhat dubious! We must be thankful that the yellow kinds are merely called "golden" and not maids suffering from jaundice. Then Trees, they are ever supposed to "lift protesting branches," or to express mysteriously their "great hearts" to puny mankind. Why cannot they just joyously grow?

Lilies must ever be "pure," violets "modest" and ivy "clinging," utnil we can scarcely see the simple natural beauty of all flowers without these tiresome epithets rising in our minds.

Poppies, as a symbol of sleep, are too recently consecrated by the fields of the dead in Flanders for us to cavil at this pathetic description.

But there arises a great weariness for readers when so many "poets" appear to regard the Earth and Sea, the Heavens and the Moon as just ready-made stores where they can pick up a cheap bargain for their pens to utilize.

The older poets wrote far more simply, "My love is like a red red rose, that's newly sprung in June," is exquisite, and may be taken to mean the pink star-like bloom of the wild rose equally with the garden-produced blossom.

And then, the Sea! that awe-inspiring Titan whom man has never wholly conquered, it is forced into humble servitude that it may tempt puny humans to bathe in it or to reveal itself as rippling sweetly on sandy beaches. But who that has ever listened, with bearing heart, to the tremendous, reverberating thunder of its irresistible breaking against huge cliffs and heard the scream and hiss, as of a thousand serpents, as it retreats to gather up again and again the awful onslaught, can speak in "pretty" terms of a power that is stronger than an army with banners, and as relentless as Death? The Sea which holds more dead in its womb than does the Earth! Who has attempted to write a "poem" on the mountainous tidal wave that, heaved up by a volcanic disturbance, sweeps over cities and villages and leaves no living human in its plunging retreat? The utter magnificence of its strength.

The fire that purrs and crackles pleasantly in a poet's sitting-room, its glow reflected on the tea-cups and warming the poet's toes, may move him to pen smooth lines, but what of the fire that roars across plains and forests, leaving an arid brown waste where once beauty flourished? Too vast, too terrible, you say, to depict in poetry? If that be so, then the Muse must rise up and clad herself in steel and unsheath the terrible, sharp sword that, too long, she has left in its velvet scabbard.

For it is a portent of revolt against elegant sensations that has driven some moderns into depicting sheer ugliness, and into portraying fleshly vice as being more veritable than Dolly Vardon's smiles and boudoir love-making. But is there no other road? Is not strength more beautiful and enduring than all else? Consider the unconquerable might of the Soil; man makes a charnel-house where foul creatures prey on the dead, and where the stench of decaying flesh is overpowering, and lo! in but a short space of time the teeming earth covers all horrors with her green mantle, and scarlet blossoms cast a glory over foulness and putrifaction. Even where the hottest fires have swept the soil bare, the grass springs greener than before.

Ah, that some spiritual destroying flame could by its fierce burning cauterize these many "tired souls," these vague "yearnings" of various verse-writers, and then might a new and resistless life spring up and cover these imaginary woes.

As it is, we can hear Dame Nature forbearing by chiding the poets, saying, with her tender smile, "Little human, die you must, and then shall I weave a beauty over your dead body that you never achieved or equalled in your would-be art." Therefore—let us have no more "Roses," no more "birds carolling," no more "nature-chirpings." "Send us a Man, O Sahib," send us a MAN.

KIPLING AND YORKSHIRE

Dr. Vaughan Bateson, senior police surgeon in Bradford, and for many years a personal friend of Rudyard Kipling both in India and in England, has a letter from Kipling, in which, discussing his Yorkshire ancestry, the author wrote: "We used to be small Nidderdale yeomen, and I believe that in a humble way few stocks carry back cleaner Yorkshire blood for a longer time. I think we are West Riding for a matter of two hundred years, a thing of which I am not a little proud."

Dr. Bateson says Yorkshire records of the Kipling family go back to the Norman Survey, and no part of the Empire owns so large a share of Rudyard as the county of broad acres. Kiplin (no final g), in the parish of Catterick, was the home of the Baltimore family who founded Baltimore in the U.S.A. in 1633, and not far away was Richmond, where Rudyard Kipling's ancestors lived and where most of the Kiplings live to-day.

He believes the author's forebears originated in 1519 the "Kiplin Cotes," the oldest, longest and most gruelling horse-race in England. While most members of the family stayed on their farms, Thomas

Kipling, the son of a Bowes cattle salesman, became Dean of Peterborough and Deputy Regius Professor of Divinity at St. John's College, Cambridge.

Rudyard Kipling's great-great-grandfather came from Bedale or Richmond, and in 1800 the Wesleyan Methodists at Lythe, a little north of Whitby, were presided over by the author's great-grandfather, John Kipling, who married Ann Hansell, and their eldest son, Joseph, the grandfather of Rudyard, was born at Lythe, and was at one time Wesleyan minister at Pateley Bridge. Probably Rudyard's last Yorkshire holiday was in 1883, when he was seventeen and a half, but many years later, in *Greenhow Hill* he vividly described the district.

Dr. Bateson recalls that as a youngster Rudyard Kipling was turned out of the church at Carleton, near Skipton, during the wedding ceremony of Mr. J. A. Slingsby, who, although over eighty, is still chairman of the U.D.C. Rudyard was caught sketching the ceremony, and evidently he had become a " reporter " at an early age.

It is therefore particularly pertinent that a Yorkshire Committee of the Rudyard Kipling Memorial Fund has been formed for the purpose of securing funds for the granting of Kipling Scholarships to boys who are the sons of Yorkshire servants of the Empire. The Earl of Athlone will be present at a Banquet to be held in Leeds in November, and Major-General L. C. Dunsterville (Stalky), the only survivor of the famous trio, will also attend.

The Committee is at present constituted by Lord Middleton, The Archbishop of York, The Bishop of Leeds, The Earl Fitzwilliam, Sir James Baillie, Professor G. Bullough, Professor B. Dobree, The Rev. Canon Thompson-Elliott, Judge Frankland, Mr. Arthur Mann, Mrs. McGrigor Phillips (Dorothy Una Ratcliffe), Major Stanley Pearson, Dr. A. W. Pickard-Cambridge, Mr. Frank S. Russell, Mr. H. J. Staines, Mr. O. B. Stokes, Lieut.-Colonel C. H. Tetley. The Editor of THE POETRY REVIEW (himself a Yorkshireman) is the representative of The Poetry Society (Incorporated) on the Council of the Fund.

THE B.B.C. AND POETRY READING

The B.B.C. returned in full force last month to its old and most acceptable love. Instead of a three minutes' poetry reading, the Grosvenor House dance-band programme was interrupted for 45 minutes, to allow the " presentation," with all the pomp and circumstance of " an hour of variety " of " The Modern Muse." Introduced by a jangle of " musical " instruments, the music-hall scheme was followed further by the use of a " compère," in this instance Mr. Michael Roberts, with his profound concern for the subject and the individuals he was introducing—so deeply moved as to be very solemn, dispassionate, subjective, and almost toneless, reminiscent of Mr. Middleton in his garden. His choir of readers, too, lacked vitality, and were generally lugubrious and sadly matter-of-fact, with the

common tendency of dropping voices at line endings, making it almost impossible to follow any one poem or even to complete any one line. But there was one notable exception. Mr. Louis MacNiece did not trouble to turn his lines into detached prose statements and literal, dogmatic assertions, but read them with a fine cadence, and as though they constituted poetry and gave him delight. To show that there is a lyrical quality in modern verse, several items were " sung " to " modern musical " accompaniment—dirge-like and ineffective, the words not being distinguishable. The concluding poem, Spender's " No Fallacies " (which we were unable to trace subsequently) seemed to epitomize the modern Muse as presented by the B.B.C. It is apparently too simple a matter for those in authority to revert to their original simplicity and comprehensiveness. Recent criticism, if effective at all, has engendered a spirit of contrariness. But it is pertinent to quote from what two independent authorities had to say a little time ago.

Miss Hilda Matheson in *The Observer*, substantiated our case for more time for the broadcast reading of poetry :

" The B.B.C. is full of good intentions. I will not press the metaphor ; but at least they seldom lead its officers to the heaven of wholly satisfied listeners. The good intentions are obvious in every statement of programme policy, in every announcement of forthcoming programmes. But when the Corporation lacks the courage of its convictions (perhaps they are no longer convictions), and implements its promises in a niggardly way, it misses the ha'pence and does not avoid the kicks. ' A comprehensive series has been planned,' we read, ' in which it is intended to read the best and most individual work of all the most important English poets.' The haters of English poetry, of whom the B.B.C. is so afraid, would groan anyway on learning of this intention. But its lovers, who may have had a faint hope that the B.B.C. would one day do for the foundations of poetry what they have so admirably done for the foundations of music—will they be wholly pleased when they discover that the grandiose promise refers to a single weekly period on Tuesday afternoons of a quarter of an hour ? Heaven be praised, the best and most individual work of all the most important English poets, from Chaucer onwards, can *not* be compressed, even over a period of nine months, into these little weekly gobbets. But why pretend that it can ? And why not do the thing well and thoroughly, at a good time, and earn the credit which the idea deserves, but where its execution does not ? With an adequate alternative on the other wave, no one could seriously complain. . . . Fifteen minutes does not allow of anything more than extracts from some of the greatest poems . . . these unduly curtailed offerings to the listener who loves words as well as music produce an impression of scrappiness which revolts or bores many potential listeners. When they see that Sir Philip Sidney is to be commemorated in ' biographical selections ' from his works (whatever that may mean), all within this

space of the inevitable fifteen minutes, they tend to avoid this sort of tribute. Why make the gesture at all, they feel, if that is your measure of its value and appeal? Discouraged, they consign the wireless to its corner, and only turn it on for the news."

Mr. Ernest Newman in the *Sunday Times* said some pertinent things about a broadcast of "Enoch Arden," to Strauss' music,—the melodrama introduced and frequently performed by our greatly respected colleague, C. G. Ashton Jonson:

"The performance did not quite come up to my ideal. . . . There were many moving touches in Mr. Ainley's part of the performance, but on the whole I thought it illustrated to the full the disadvantages of entrusting a recitation of this kind to an actor instead of to someone with a sensitive ear for poetry and music as such. Poetry is really an intimate thing. It is best read either alone or to an audience of one or two; in proportion as the numbers of the audience are increased the temptation increases to substitute other values for those of poetry pure and simple. Now the actor is used to addressing himself to large audiences and to planning effects broad enough to reach to the back of the theatre; and it is only natural that when reading pure poetry he should succumb to the temptation to dramatize his delivery, which generally means, in the circumstances, over-dramatizing the poem. In so doing, the true life of the poem as poetry is apt to be sacrificed. Not the least of the evils we then have to endure is the dislocation, in the fashion common to our actors even when dealing with Shakespeare, of the rhythm of the verse in order to knock the meaning of the sentences into the head of the average listener. Mr. Ainley, for instance, converted Tennyson's

> And high in heaven behind it a gray down
> With Danish barrows; and a hazelwood,
> By autumns nutters haunted, flourishes
> Green in a cuplike hollow of the down,

into

> A gray down with Danish barrows;
> And a hazelwood, by autumn nutters haunted,
> Flourishes green
> In a cuplike hollow of the down:

while

> on following up
> And flying the white breaker, daily left
> The little footprint daily washed away,

became

> Or following up and flying the white breaker,
> Daily left the little footprint,
> Daily washed away.

"It really seems a waste of energy on the part of the poets to give an

over-riding rhythm to their verses if the reciter of them, instead of uniformly suggesting this rhythm and at the same time subtly conveying the minor inflections it has to undergo in conformity with the sentence-structure, goes straight for the prose meaning of the sentences and leaves the poetic rhythm to look after itself. These disabilities are not the exclusive property of Mr. Ainley."

We protest daily against this common fault of over-running lines and ignoring metre, the inability to treat poetry as poetry, flagrantly demonstrated by B.B.C. readers, who frequently make an exasperating hash of poetry, insisting upon treating it as elementary prose, without music or vitality, rhythm, or metre—a perversion recognized by their being let loose about midnight, a reaction against the equally undeveloped jiggle of egoistic dance bands.

* * *

The British Annual of Literature (British Authors' Press 5s.) is a brave venture. In this handsome quarto first issue, cleanly printed, and stoutly bound in linen boards, it provides, in a sensible, literate manner, a bulletin of productions and tendencies not only in England, but in the dominions overseas, the contributions including articles on contemporary Welsh literature, the Australian novel, two South African poets, a New Zealand novelist and poet, the sonnet in Canadian literature as well as surveys of London dramatic and literary enterprise, the latter being, perhaps, the least satisfactory part of the "Annual," the books and plays dealt with having to a large extent passed into the background. An intimate résumé of John Drinkwater's career is given by his secretary; the literary achievement of Douglas Hyde, first President of the New Irish State, is sympathetically recorded; a readable and useful series of notes gives some pertinent information about the leading literary competitions and prizes of the year; and poems are contributed by Lady Margaret Sackville, Ernest Rhys, Edith M. Fry, and others—altogether a good beginning, capable of development into a comprehensive annual review of letters, well-informed and in good taste.

CHINA 1938

MAY

The willow in my garden
Is black and bare;
A scourge of locusts
Has stripped it of leaves:
How I shall miss its fluttering shade
From the summer sun!

JULY

My willow tree is budding
With a sweet spring green:
The wood-peckers are climbing,
And clearing out the grubs;
Soon I shall enjoy the willow's shade
As in years long gone!

A. P. HADWEN.

"China 1938" is written in the Chinese allusive style in which a picture from nature is used to suggest a topical situation which is not explicitly mentioned. As a heavy bombardment is going on not far away I am sending this at once. A.P.H., Wusueh, Hupeh, China, July 25.